

# Ellen Levno

February 9, 2021

Dear House and Senate Health Care Committees, Oregon Legislature:

Re: HB2673, Support Fair Pay for Naturopathic Doctors

My name is Ellen Levno, and I am your constituent. I am writing to ask for your support of HB2673. Inequity, of any kind, should never be tolerated. Please support this bill to create parity between Naturopathic Doctors (NDs) and Medical Doctors (MDs) by insurance companies.

This lack of parity is also unfair to me as a consumer. I pay the same premium whether my primary care provider (PCP) is an ND or an MD. However, my ND gets reimbursed less money. In fact, my co-pay to see an ND can be more, with certain insurance companies, because of how they code NDs. The cost of seeing a doctor should be the same whether they are an ND or an MD.

It is baffling to me that my doctor and other NDs are not being treated fairly in Oregon. They work the same long hours and carry the same responsibilities of an MD, but they are not being paid equally. I believe this is due in part to an antiquated view of NDs. People seem to think NDs can only “prescribe” roots and berries. That is not the case. When I tell people that I see a ND, I am often asked what I do when I get sick. I explained that I go to my ND. This tends to be a circular conversation, because people do not understand the education, training, and extent of care provided by NDs. It is the same as an MD.

My current PCP is Dr. Juniper Martin who is an ND. She is outstanding. She approaches healthcare with a scientific mind and evidence-based methods all the while employing the holistic and patient-centered care of an ND. Dr. Martin manages my healthcare needs by ordering tests, prescribing medications, and referring me to specialists as an MD would do. She takes the time to listen to me and asks lots of questions to better understand my condition. She also takes the time to answer my endless questions, so I understand and am comfortable with my treatment plan.

Illness can be exhausting, and it is hard to think through all of the options when not feeling well. However, I never feel alone in my healthcare journey with Dr. Martin. She creates a personalized treatment plan which she knows I can manage. I have made great strides working with Dr. Martin because she is a great doctor, educator, motivator, and champion.

Inequity should never be tolerated. I ask you not to tolerate the unjust practice of insurance companies paying NDs less than MDs. You can right this wrong. You have the power to fix this. I am asking you to please do that now by voting yes on HB2673 to support fair pay for NDs.

Sincerely yours,  
Ellen Levno