



## OREGON ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

### **HB 2673 – Naturopath Pay Parity**

The Oregon Academy of Family Physicians opposes HB 2673. Our members appreciate the valuable contribution naturopaths provide to whole patient care. At the same time, our members also recognize that naturopath training is fundamentally different in its approach, focus and depth, and thus do not believe that pay parity is the appropriate pathway to support the care that naturopaths provide.

This bill seeks to require insurers to pay the same fee-for-service rate when a naturopathic physician provides the “same service” as a physician. In that endeavor, the bill is fundamentally flawed. Naturopathic and allopathic (or “Western”) medicine are not interchangeable. In fact, it is the essential difference in philosophy, approach, and focus that allows these two disciplines to complement each other. Patients choose to see naturopathic practitioners as a compliment to their allopathic provider, or because they are seeking a clinician who approaches health from a different perspective. Therefore, an office visit provided by one discipline is necessarily different than it would be if provided by the other.

In addition to the issue raised above, Oregon has spent years developing and refining patient-centered primary care homes (PCPCH) because it recognizes this model of care delivery as the gold standard in high-quality, cost-effective care. As we seek to transition toward a value-based payment system for primary care, payers should be rewarding practices offering team-based care that meets the high standards set by the PCPCH model. Fee-for-service reimbursement that suggests parity of two dissimilar models of care moves us further from value-based care, not toward it.

The OAFP recognizes the value of naturopathic medicine to our healthcare system. In fact, we welcome the addition of NDs to team-based primary care. But we do a disservice to both disciplines and our commitment to value-based care if we ignore the fundamental distinction between different models of care.