



**Dr. Melissa Kuser, ND, Lac**  
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Re: YES ON HB 4006, Simply time for Fair Pay.

Dear House Health Care Committee,

My name is Melissa Kuser and I am a Naturopathic Doctor (ND). I would like to share my experience working in Oregon as a licensed ND and ask you to please support HB 4006.

I have been a licensed Naturopathic Doctor in the state of Oregon for 10 years. During this time, I have served both in the role of primary care and as a naturopathic specialist for my patients. My training as an integrative primary care provider allows me to offer my patients the extensive modalities that are unique to naturopathic medicine like herbal medicine, nutrition, homeopathy and physical medicine, while at the same time being able to coordinate care with others specialists, provide annual physicals, order and interpret labs and imaging, and use pharmaceutical medications. My patients appreciate my balanced perspective which considers the individual sitting in front of me when I make treatment recommendations.

Naturopathic doctors play an important role in the healthcare system, particularly for patients who have felt neglected, shamed or poorly served by other providers. The fact that we often take more time with our patients is an asset for building rapport and being able to better motivate patients around compliance. We are able to answer questions about drug-herb interactions that many patients report their previous doctors were unable to answer.

Unfortunately, NDs are not being fairly compensated for our valuable contributions to healthcare. This makes it more difficult for people like me to stay in practice and deliver this essential, desired and unique level of care. The state is allowing private insurance companies to limit access to healthcare for patients and their families in the community. One example I will share that prompted me to immediately terminate my contract with a private insurer was when I was initially reimbursed at a standard MD rate and was paid over \$300 for my 99204 new patient visit. Subsequently the insurer reprocessed the claim, requested a refund of payment and then paid me \$18. I would be happy to share the specifics of which insurance company this was upon request.

For those of us who have been able to choose to stay in the plans, we do so at a great economic disadvantage to our peers, making it difficult to repay student loans, support staff and their families and give back to the community. One option is moving to an all-cash model that not everybody can afford, the other option is to finally pass HB 4006.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Melissa Kuser