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February 2, 2022

Re: YES ON HB 4006, It is time for Fair Pay.

Dear House Health Care Committee,

My name is Tyler Keliheleua and I am a Naturopathic Doctor (ND). I would like to share my experience working in Oregon as a licensed ND for the past 13 years and ask you to please support HB 4006.

I love helping people. This is why I have sacrificed many years and incurred hundreds of thousands of dollars in debt to become a licensed physician and practice medicine in my local community. I love connecting with people, and helping them both understand their medical condition and successfully implement a plan to move their health forward. Just like any other provider on their health care team.

I often manage the majority of the healthcare needs for my patients, whether it be their annual physical, lab orders, health screenings or prescription(s). I also make referrals to other competent providers and specialists when appropriate. In addition, I teach my patients about diet and nutrition, how to stay active, manage stress, improve their sleep and become more proactive in their own healthcare. All of these things come together to create a more complete long-term care plan that ultimately results in improved health and cost-savings.

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. By allowing these unfair reimbursement practices to continue the state is permitting private insurance companies to limit access to healthcare for patients and their families as well as the community at large.

Though I have continued to participate with many insurance networks, I do so at a great economic disadvantage to my peers, making it difficult to repay student loans, support my current staff and their families, hire additional help that is sorely needed, and give back to the community. Because of the current circumstances, there is a great migration of primary care physicians like myself out of insurance based practice and into a cash based model or out of practice altogether.

It is time to pass HB 4006 so that we can restore balance to the market and preserve and expand access to care for all of our citizen-patients.

Sincerely,

Tyler Keliheleua, N.D.