



Chair Nosse, Vice Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, Members of the House Behavioral Health & Health Care Committee

Re: HB 2626, Relating to rural medical provider tax credits

The Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians (OANP) requests your support of HB2626 with the -2 amendment relating to tax credits for rural providers.

OANP would like to thank the Committee for your attention and service to support the needs of our rural communities. However, as you know there is a significant need for more primary care providers ALL around the state, but even more so in our rural areas.

The -2 amendment will include Naturopathic Physicians in the tax credit bill and will help incentivize NDs to start their practice in these communities to help meet the underserved need of primary care. We know in some areas, patients may have to wait up to 8 months to see a provider and this is unacceptable. There are several OANP members who would appreciate this tax credit which will help them continue to care for their patients.

Naturopathic Medical education is as expensive as conventional medical school education and many of our doctors are graduating with over \$300,000 in student loans. These doctors cannot afford to move to a rural area without some assistance. Understanding this, the Legislature decided to include Naturopathic Physicians in the loan forgiveness and loan repayment programs for practicing in a rural area. We ask that the same consideration be made with HB2626 by adding the +2 amendment to extend the tax credit to NDs providing care to the underserved rural communities.

Thank you for considering supporting HB2626 with the -2 amendment to this important bill to encourage more providers to work in rural Oregon.

Sincerely,

Sara Love, ND  
Chair, OANP Legislative Steering Committee