

To: House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee

Subject: Support ND Fair Reimbursements - Re: HB 2555

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my support for HB 2555, which aims to address the unfair reimbursement rates for naturopathic doctors (NDs) in Oregon. As a naturopathic medical student enrolled in a four-year, post-baccalaureate accredited medical program, I am trained to become a primary care physician specializing in preventative services and chronic disease management. Our program requires a minimum of 1,200 hours of clinical training and preceptorship, and we must pass a professional competency exam to practice naturopathic medicine. Our clinical training takes place at the NUNM Clinic, which is recognized as a Tier 4 Patient-Centered Primary Care Home (PCPCH) and participates in the Vaccine for Children (VFC) program. We receive comprehensive primary care education that equips us to help address the primary care workforce shortage in Oregon.

Despite our extensive training and qualifications, there is a significant disparity in insurance reimbursement rates for NDs compared to other primary care providers. This has serious implications for our ability to practice in Oregon and meet the healthcare needs of our patients. Additionally, the burden of student loans that most students carry is significant, with some carrying up to \$250,000 in debt.

HB 2555 offers hope to address this issue by requiring insurers to pay NDs the same amount for the same services provided as it pays MDs, DOs, NPs, and PAs. Passing this bill would not only help NDs survive as doctors, but also have a positive impact on patients and the healthcare system at large. It would increase patient access to care in rural and underserved communities, protect patient choice of provider, and sustain the 1,200 NDs who are already trained and licensed as part of the state's workforce during this time of provider shortage.

As a naturopathic medical student, I am learning every day how to improve the health of my patients and help them avoid chronic diseases. Our focus on patient education and prevention, combined with our unique skill set, enables us to reduce healthcare costs and alleviate the burden on the system. The patients we see in our teaching clinic reflect the value of our approach and the importance of bringing it to communities in Oregon.

I urge you to support HB 2555 and make it possible for me and other NDs to achieve our professional dream and serve our patients to the best of our abilities.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Monica Fedall

NUNM Student, year 4/4
503-310-8260