

Dear House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee,

My name is Allen Barber. I am a patient of a licensed naturopathic doctor (ND). I want to share my experience working with my doctor and ask you to support HB2555.

Though there are many diverse and valuable types of medical providers, the provider that I, above all, value for my regular care is my ND. My doctor's clinical expertise, unique training, and dedicated time and attention given to all my concerns make him irreplaceable to me.

My ND manages most of my healthcare needs, including annual wellness visits, necessary lab and imaging tests, preventive screening exams, and vital prescriptions. They also refer me to medical specialists as needed, working in partnership with other providers to offer a truly integrative approach to my healthcare.

My ND teaches me about my health and how to best manage my concerns through diet and nutrition, staying active, overcoming stress, improving my sleep, and prescribing medications or alternative treatments. This is the best type of preventive medicine and has saved me from worse illnesses or more expensive treatments down the line.

Unfortunately, naturopathic doctors in Oregon are not being fairly compensated for the care they give me and their essential role in our state's healthcare workforce. Naturopathic doctors are paid about half of what all the other provider types (MDs, DOs, NPs, and PAs) are paid for the same billing code(s) and the same service provided. This discrepancy puts my doctor on unstable financial ground and jeopardizes my access to my provider of choice. As a result, naturopathic doctors are being forced to drop insurance plans to remain financially viable.

I must be able to utilize my health insurance to see my doctor. However, I cannot afford to purchase both health insurance and pay out of pocket for my regular and preventive care. It's not only unfair, but it's also unrealistic. I need my ND to stay in network with my insurance and to stay in business!

Please vote yes on HB2555 and ensure access to licensed naturopathic doctors.

Sincerely,  
Allen Barber