

Dear House Behavioral Health and Health Care Committee,

My name is Steve Kraus.

As a patient of a licensed naturopathic doctor (ND), I want to share my experience of working with my doctor and urge you to support HB2555.

Of all the valuable medical provider types available, I place the highest value on my ND for my regular care. My doctor's clinical expertise and unique training, coupled with the attentive time and consideration given to all my concerns, make them indispensable to me.

My ND manages the majority of my healthcare needs, including annual wellness visits, necessary lab and imaging tests, preventive screening exams, and vital medications and treatments. My ND takes the time to educate me about my health and how to manage my concerns through nutrition, staying active, overcoming stress, and improving my sleep. They also refer me to medical specialists as needed, working in partnership with other providers to offer a truly integrative approach to my healthcare.

Many NDs act as primary care physicians, following evidence-based healthcare guidelines and resources to ensure that I am provided quality care for long term health. This preventative approach has saved me from worse illness or more expensive treatments down the line.

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

It is crucial for me to be able to use my health insurance to see my doctor, as I cannot afford to both purchase health insurance and pay out of pocket for my regular and preventive care. This situation is not only unfair but unrealistic. I need my ND to stay in network with my insurance and in business!

Therefore, I urge you to vote yes on HB2555 and ensure access to licensed naturopathic doctors.

Sincerely,

Steven H. Kraus