

Chair Nosse, Vice-Chairs Goodwin and Nelson, and Members of the Committee:

For the record, my name is Dr. Sara Love and I am the chair of the Legislative Committee at the Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians. I am requesting your support of HB2555. HB2555 would invest more money into primary care by creating pay parity for naturopathic physicians for similar services provided by other providers including NP/PA/MD/DO. The methods that insurance companies utilize to pay NDs are not prescribed in this bill and alternative payment models such as a value-based payment system are allowed.

The definition of primary care in Oregon is purposefully broad and appreciates that individuals should have choices that fit their specific health needs, including naturopathic medicine. A yes vote on HB2555 will increase the amount of money payers pay for primary care which has been a priority of this committee in previous legislative sessions. Recent research from Portland State University has demonstrated that for every dollar spent on primary care homes there is a \$12 return to the health care system.

The current system of reimbursement is that NDs are paid approx half of what other providers are paid for the same services. Because of this discrepancy many NDs have stopped billing insurance for patients, had to reduce staff, and at worst, had to close their offices. This creates a disruption in care for many Oregonians and reduces their ability to choose their provider.

This bill does not expand scope of practice for naturopathic doctors. It does not allow for the reduction in reimbursement for any other provider.

The small investment in primary care from HB2555 would allow more patients to be seen by a primary care physician, reduce wait times for appointments, increase access to care, and allow NDs to be able to hire additional support staff to care for Oregonians.

Oregonians want increased access to primary care and the ability to choose providers that are in-network with their insurance, but with so many clinics not able to financially accept certain insurance plans their option is to pay cash for visits or seek care elsewhere and experience long wait times. Many Oregonians who appreciate their ND have written letters of support which are all in OLIS for your review. In OLIS, you will also find letters of support from other providers including MD, DO, Pharmacists, Dentists, Physical Therapists, Behavioral Health providers, and more, writing their appreciation of ND care as an integral component of the primary care system.

Thank you for your consideration and I urge your support for HB2555.

Sara Love, ND