

# Eliminating Barriers to Health Care for Oregonians

"Well Life Medicine is a Tier 5 PCPCH–certified medical home that provides primary care, urgent care, lab services, vaccines, therapy, and mental health care. With three locations, it is poised to become the largest Medicaid primary care provider in the Salem area, employing multiple naturopathic physicians (NDs) who deliver patient-centered, evidence-based care. However, many vendors still do not accept ND orders for home health services, diabetic shoes, or durable medical equipment, creating unnecessary barriers to patient access."



- Dr. Aubrey Harding, ND,  
Owner, Well Life Medicine.



## Barriers

- **Hospital Access Barriers:** Many hospitals do not accept hospital admit plans from NDs, delaying timely care by forcing acutely ill patients to be admitted through the ER.
- **Durable Medical Equipment (DME) & Home Health Orders:** Insurers and vendors often refuse ND orders for DME, diabetic shoes, and home health services – forcing unnecessary visits to other clinicians.
- **No Practical Retired License Option:** NDs nearing retirement face costly active requirements or burdensome inactive status, with no flexible alternative.

## Solutions

- Require hospitals to consider coordinated admit plans with NDs to prevent delays in care and reduce unnecessary ER visits.
- Require insurers and vendors to accept prescriptions of DME, diabetic shoes, and home health services from NDs, to reduce care delays and unnecessary visits, saving patients and insurers money.
- Lower the age of ND retired status from 70 to 65 to meet the needs of retiring physicians.

## Why This Matters!

- ✓ Reduced emergency room strain
- ✓ Lower patient costs
- ✓ Faster access to needed medical equipment
- ✓ Support for rural and underserved communities
- ✓ Sensible licensing options for healthcare providers

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Naturopathic medicine is a practice of western, science-based medicine distinguished by an emphasis on disease prevention and health optimization. Naturopathic medicine utilizes both natural and pharmaceutical medicines, prescribing the least invasive interventions first when it is safe to do so. The Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians (OANP) was first established in 1909. Naturopathic physicians (NDs) have subsequently been licensed in the state since 1927. Naturopathic medicine enjoys an excellent patient safety record spanning 92 years of continuous licensure and board oversight in Oregon.