

Submitter: Vera Alcorn
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3439

I am joining in with my naturopathic colleagues and the members of the Naturopathic Physicians and the Oregon Association of Naturopathic Physicians (OANP) urge you to pass HB3439 out of the House Committee On Behavioral Health and Health Care. HB3439 will help improve the delivery of primary care services in Oregon. Over 1200 Licensed Naturopathic Physicians serve over 100,000 Oregonians each year and we need to be able keep our clinics open to continue serving our patients and our communities.

HB3439 requires that insurance companies pay naturopathic doctors (ND) fairly and on par with what other primary care providers are paid for providing the same services. Currently, NDs are reimbursed on average at half the rate of PAs, NPs, DOs and MDs. NDs are well-regulated and licensed as primary care providers. Thousands of Oregonians seek out the safe, effective and integrative care that NDs provide.

Every year, NDs are financially forced to either lay off staff and close their clinics or to move to a cash model, excluding those who are not affluent. This is diminishing Oregonians' access to safe and effective naturopathic care and we as a state should not be complicit in this. Oregon is currently experiencing a primary care provider shortage which will only be exacerbated if HB3439 does not advance.

HB3439 has a minuscule fiscal impact of 3 million dollars embedded in the OHA biennial budget, yet the profound positive impact on patient care for Oregonians far outweighs the cost. This allocation would go toward primary care, which has been a priority of this legislature. HB3439 will not only increase patients' ability to choose their doctors, but will also support the hundreds of small businesses across the state that provide naturopathic care.

Please vote "YES" on HB3439 at its upcoming hearing.