

**Patients are losing access to the primary care providers of their choice and Oregon small businesses are suffering.**

**Oregon has an ongoing shortage of primary care providers.** The state and federal government spends nearly \$60 million every biennium to incentivize and retain PCPs in underserved areas of the state. This includes payments to Naturopathic Doctors (NDs), who are trained as primary care physicians and regulated in Oregon since 1927.

*“Increase access to primary care provided by Naturopathic Physicians (NDs) by removing coverage and credentialing barriers. In some locations, NDs are an underutilized and immediately available primary care workforce”*

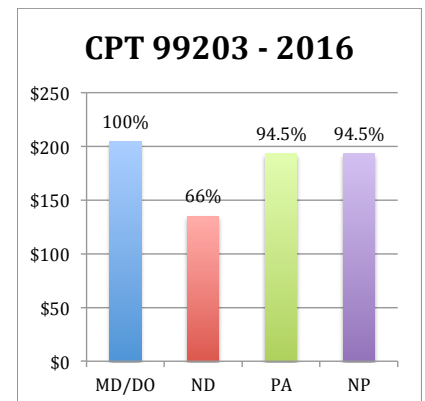
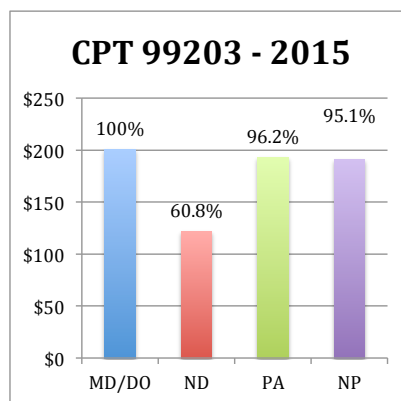
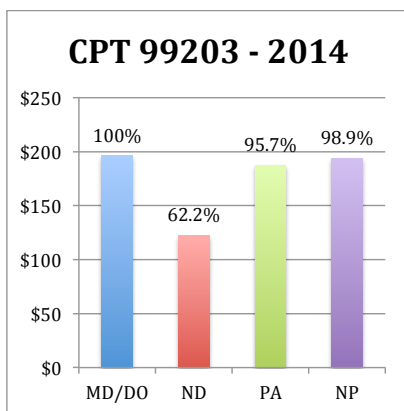
*— Recommendation from Oregon Health Policy Board’s 5-year Strategic Plan*

- There are over 1000 NDs licensed and practicing all across Oregon (ask us for your local ND!).
- Students of Naturopathic Medicine complete a 4-year graduate medical program with the same science-based underpinnings as other providers.
- Average debt-load for a graduate is \$250,000; tuition averages \$35,000 annually.
- Residencies exist and are accredited, but must be paid for privately - exacerbating the access issue.

**Oregonians lose access to care when NDs can’t make the financials pencil out.** Federal and state laws provide for equity for any primary care provider within the network who is acting within their scope of work. In Oregon we are seeing significant gaps for the same billing codes.

**SUPPORT PARITY, NOT DISPARITY**

All payers, All claims (APAC) data directly from the OHA lays bare the truth: Despite both state and federal health care provider non-discrimination laws, Naturopathic Physicians are consistently reimbursed at only about 60% of billing<sup>1</sup> for the same office visits as MDs or DOs and need statutory protections similar to those for PAs and NPs.



<sup>1</sup> CPT Code 99203 is the billing code for a patient’s initial appointment, always consisting of 3 components: detailed history, detailed examination & low-complexity medical decision. Likewise, 99213 is used for follow up visits.