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Subject: Support of HB867

My name is Natalie Gustafson, PharmD and independent pharmacy owner, and I'm in support of House Bill 867. I've been a pharmacist who has worked closely with naturopathic doctors who have prescribing rights in Oregon for over 16 years. I've filled hundreds of thousands of prescriptions written by thousands of naturopathic doctors, not only from this state but others. In addition, I chair an advisory committee on prescribing for the Oregon Board of Naturopathic Medicine and have been a member for the last 14 years. Please note all of my statements are from my personal experience and beliefs, and not on behalf of the council or the board.

One concern that is expressed when deciding whether to give naturopathic doctors prescribing rights is patient safety, since the naturopathic doctors haven't had the same experience prescribing. My experience in Oregon has shown that NDs have a stellar safety record with prescriptions. I've had no concerns brought to my council's attention to request restrictions on prescribing rights. As a pharmacist, I am responsible for ensuring the safety and appropriateness of medications prescribed to patients, and have not seen a discernible difference amongst various types of prescribers, including naturopathic doctors.

Given the excellent safety record I've seen over hundreds of thousands of prescriptions written by naturopathic doctors, I do not have concerns about giving them prescribing rights. In my experience, naturopathic doctors tend to be rather conservative in their prescribing habits, and their focus on a natural and holistic approach. Most work hard to help their patients reduce their medication burden as appropriate.

Another important aspect of patient safety is access to medical care. In Oregon, we've seen naturopathic doctors play key roles in helping address practitioner shortages, which has provided increased access to medical care for patients.

I've spoken to many thousands of patients in my pharmacy who are getting prescriptions written by naturopathic doctors. Patients tell me stories about how their naturopathic doctor spends more time with them during their visits than their other doctors are able to, and how many people use naturopathic doctors because they have such a hard time finding availability with other practitioners. Giving naturopathic doctors prescribing rights has simplified patient care, because the logistics get very complex when the patient must work with multiple doctors to get a prescription filled. I've witnessed many patients have life changing experiences due to their naturopathic doctor that wouldn't be possible without their prescribing ability.

From my extensive experience, naturopathic doctors are thoughtful, careful prescribers who focus on patient safety and well-being. I strongly urge you to **vote YES on HB67** at its upcoming hearing. Thank you for your time and commitment to improving healthcare access in our state.

Sincerely,

Natalie Gustafson, PharmD
Owner and Director of Pharmacy