

# Emily A. Kane, ND LAc

Naturopathic Doctor

Alaska License № 22

Licensed Acupuncturist

Alaska License № 18

February 8, 2011

## In support of HB 112

Dear Legislators,

There is a severe doctor shortage in Alaska. Many Medicaid patients in the state today are unable to find a doctor who accepts Medicaid assignment. Naturopathic physicians, who graduate from federally accredited medical schools with doctorate-level training, would like to serve this population without legal barriers.

Some of the challenges in delivering more care for less cost can be met by expanding the scope of practice for naturopathic physicians, a highly trained group of mid-level health care professionals who currently operate under a restricted legal system.

Consider the benefits Alaskans have enjoyed by legislating increased scope for advanced nurse practitioners, dental hygienists and optometrists. Chronic, and emergency medical, dental and vision problems can now be resolved without costly referrals.

Nurse practitioners were granted prescription endorsement because they made the case that expanding their scope of practice would better serve all Alaskans. This has proven to be true. There are, at this time, fewer naturopathic physicians in Alaska than ANPs and therefore we have less lobbying power. Nevertheless, naturopathic physicians, who have been licensed to practice medicine in Alaska since 1986, have significantly more medical training than nurse practitioners. NDs have doctorate level natural medical training, including 20% more pharmacy training, than advanced nurse practitioners who hold master's level degrees.

We would like to bring our law into line with our training. We see no controversy in this proposal. NDs are the most highly trained experts in preventive medicine. We are critically important in helping to turn the focus of healthcare towards wellness and prevention.

Naturopathic physicians offer an alternative to drugs as a first choice for medical intervention. We will always choose safer, effective therapies (such as diet changes, or plant remedies) before going to drugs or riskier interventions. However, it is inconvenient, inefficient and potentially dangerous (because of delay in service) to refer a patient needing emergency care such as a short course of a legend drug to another doctor. Naturopathic physicians are perfectly capable of effectively providing these services to our patients, usually for significantly less cost.

Thank you for your consideration to endorse HB 122, which will allow holistically oriented physicians, with deep and rigorous scientific training and an excellent safety record, to more fully serve your constituents.

Sincerely,



Dr. Emily A. Kane

serving Juneau since 1995

418 Harris Street, Suite 329 Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: 907-586-3655 FAX: 907-586-4326 email: DoctorEm@aol.com