



ALASKA ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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The Honorable Kurt Olson
State Capitol Room 24
Juneau AK, 99801

Dear Representative Olson,

As president of the Alaskan Academy of Family Physicians, I represent over 360 Family Physicians across Alaska. My colleagues and I have grave concerns about the formation of an independent board for naturopathic providers.

The creation of an independent board would not be appropriate as this would allow the very small number of providers of Naturopathy in Alaska to define their own scope of practice. This would allow them to practice well beyond their level of training and this in turn would lead to patient harm.

HB 122 would allow Naturopaths the ability to perform procedures that are outside their scope of practice. Although Naturopathic schools are 4 years in length, the number of hours spent in direct patient care is 10 % of either doctors of osteopathy or doctors of medicine. Physicians are not competent to begin unsupervised practice upon graduating medical school, but must go through at least another two years of residency and preferably three. There is no equivalency in training between graduates of Naturopathic schools and Physicians. Allowing Naturopaths the ability to intravenously administer Dietetic substances, for example, could cause great harm.

The primary function of a board is to ensure that licensees are appropriate in their practice and their interactions with others. Having served on the State Medical Board, I can assure you that this is difficult even with the much larger pool of physicians, physician assistants, and paramedics which fall under the State Medical Board's jurisdiction. It is very difficult to objectively judge health care providers that you know and to take appropriate action. A state board is not a booster club, but rather a disciplinary body.

This is especially an issue at this time of significant budgetary constraints. There is a substantial fiscal impact in the creation of a regulatory board. Currently, there are not enough resources for the existing boards. This results in long waiting times to obtain licensure and has a direct impact on availability of physicians to the public and access to care. In addition, limitations in funding could negatively impact the board's ability to investigate cases, again resulting in patient harm.

The Alaskan Academy of Family Physicians is the largest body of primary care physicians in

the state. We feel that there are more important issues for the Legislature to consider with regard to health care, especially with the looming impact on our state of the Affordable Care Act. Resources should not be diverted to further the self interest of a fairly small group of alternative health care providers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John L. Miller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

President
Alaska Academy of Family Physicians