

Dr. Daniel J. Young  
Center for Natural Medicine, Inc.

March 16, 2011

Representative Kurt Olson  
State Capitol, Room 24  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

Representative Olson,

I understand that House Bill 122, introduced by Representative Cathy Munoz, is due to be heard again on Friday by the Labor and Commerce Committee. I know that you are the Chair for that committee. I urge you to review the packet that you will, or have received about our medical training. It does an excellent job of addressing any concerns that you might have about our education and medical training. I think that you will find that naturopathic doctors are excellent healthcare providers and deserve to practice their full scope of training. The naturopathic profession here in Alaska has demonstrated an excellent safety record. Our interest in holistic, comprehensive and preventative care will not change as our scope is brought into line with our level of training. We will still be safe. The bill, as you know, also addresses the need for a naturopathic board so that we can be regulated by unbiased and objective healthcare professionals. This is again another safeguard.

House Bill 122 is a culmination of years of work by the naturopathic doctors who practice here in Alaska. Our numbers are small and we don't have the financing that the Alaska State Medical Association has, but that doesn't negate the fact that we are good doctors. I'm sure that by now you have seen some of the obstacles that we face as we try to update this statute. The ASMA wants to block this bill, but their concerns are over turf. They do not, and have never understood our level of medical education and training. They quote sources that are inaccurate or contain partial truths at best. They, as an association, have an agenda to stifle our growth and protect their self serving interests. They only wish that they had our unparalleled safety record. We on the other hand, are only interested in serving our patients and providing the conscientious patient-centered healthcare that we have been trained to deliver. We don't put patients on drugs. We change their lives. Unfortunately, this doesn't happen overnight. Patients need prescription drugs in emergency situations; especially in rural districts where there is no other physician to refer to. Sometimes prescription drugs need to be carefully adjusted to prevent interactions. Many drugs require incremental dosing in order to wean a patient off. Not only are Naturopathic doctors the foremost experts on interactions between prescription drugs and natural substances, they are also the authority on drugs that come from natural substances. This is where their training truly excels! These are some examples, but the

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bottom line is that we need prescriptive authority to access the natural medications that we use. The medical doctors, osteopaths, and registered nurses that I interact with on a daily basis don't even understand what all the fuss is about. My wife, who is a cardiovascular nurse cannot understand how she can attend two more years of school and be able to practice as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner and have prescriptive authority. Her husband, a naturopathic doctor, who has 26 years of education, 6 years of premedical undergraduate study and 7 years of medical school, can't even write for an antibiotic or a natural substance.

I have practiced naturopathic medicine for 19 years, 16 of those here in Eagle River, Alaska. I am thoroughly frustrated, as are my patients, with the limitations placed on my practice by our antiquated Alaskan statute. I am embarrassed that the Alaska State Legislature has been so influenced by the ASMA political agenda that they fail to update our law.

You have a chance to help us to help Alaskans. They have a right to access the full level of care that we can provide. Other professions do not have the right to interpret what we do or to monopolize an industry to prevent us from practicing our medicine. I respectfully urge you to do the right thing for Alaskans. Please pass House Bill 122 from your committee on Friday.

Sincerely,

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