

February 6, 2012

Alaska State Legislature

To Whom It May Concern:

As a pharmacist practicing in the state of Alaska I would like to comment on House Bill No.266 and Senate Bill No. 175 being presented to the Alaska State Legislature this week. This bill would allow persons practicing naturopathic medicine the right to give, prescribe, or recommend in practice a prescription drug that is derived from a concentrate of or an extract of a plant, tree, root, moss, fungus, or other natural substance if the medicine is not a controlled substance.

There are many prescription medications currently on the market which are derived from one of the above mentioned sources. These medications could include insulin, steroids, heart medications such as digoxin, cold medications such as pseudoephedrine, antibiotics such as penicillin, and chemotherapy such as etoposide or taxol. These are only a few of the “natural” medications available by prescription that could fall under this definition.

It is my understanding that naturopathic medicine is a form of alternative medicine based on a belief in vitalism that favors a holistic approach rather than encouraging the use of unnecessary drugs. This being said, why would a naturopath need to enact a bill to give them the right to use these medications which are the standard of care in traditional medicine. Furthermore, I am concerned that there would not be proper monitoring of the patient which is necessary for patient safety when using medications such as digoxin, insulin, or the chemotherapeutic agents.

I thank you for allowing me to express my concerns and hope they will be considered in discussion on this proposed bill.

Sincerely,

Robin L. Cooke, PharmD, RPh
5642 Sapphire Loop
Anchorage, AK 99504