



March 14, 2024

Senator Cathy Giessel
State Capitol, Room 427
Juneau, AK 99801

EMAIL: Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov
Jane.Conway@akleg.gov

Re: Support of Naturopathic Medicine Regulation in Alaska – SB 44

Dear Honorable Senator Cathy Giessel:

The California Board of Naturopathic Medicine (Board) would like to provide this letter to show our strong support of state regulation of naturopathic medicine in the State of Alaska.

Naturopathic medicine is a distinct and comprehensive system of primary healthcare practiced by a naturopathic doctor for the diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of human health conditions, injuries, and disease. Naturopathic medicine expanded upon the water cure and herbal therapies and was developed into a comprehensive philosophy and system of healthcare, which came to the United States around the turn of the 20th Century.

As the regulatory entity for naturopathic doctors (ND) in California, it is our main mission to serve the public and licensed naturopathic doctors through the promotion and enforcement of laws and regulations which protect the health and safety of consumers, thus ensuring access to safe, high quality naturopathic medical care.

In 2003, SB 907 (Burton, Chapter 485, and Statutes of 2003) established the Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine, within the Department of Consumer Affairs (Department) to license and regulate naturopathic doctors and enforce the Naturopathic Doctors Act. California was the thirteenth state to recognize naturopathic medicine and provide licensure to NDs.

Twenty years later California now licenses over 1,200 NDs, who have met the requirements of successful completion of an accredited naturopathic medical school and passed either the NPLEX (Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Examination) through NABNE or an equivalent state exam. The former Committee was changed into an semi-autonomous board in 2023 and currently has one of the smallest enforcement caseloads within the Department. At this time, 87% of our 126 cases are for unlicensed practice and not violations committed by licensees, 8% are minor advertising violations and 1% is for unprofessional conduct. In California, the Board has not had any cases of patient harm since the enactment the Naturopathic Doctors Act in 2003. The

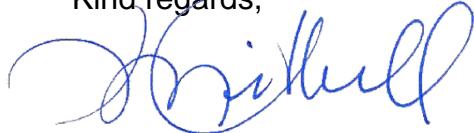
naturopathic medical profession has the lowest malpractice rate of any healing arts professions both in California and in the nation. The Board works closely with the other healing arts regulatory boards in California to provide the highest consumer protection possible.

Naturopathic Doctors are highly qualified and skillfully trained primary care providers (PCP) that deliver an important role in the health care system. Trained to prescribe medications and perform minor office procedures, NDs commonly treat patients who would otherwise end up congesting the urgent care centers and/or emergency rooms at hospitals. By permitting regulated, licensed naturopathic medicine, it allows naturopathic doctors to assist in closing the gap in PCP shortages; both allowing the ease of access and consumer protection to those individuals that in many cases, would either have a delay in care or not receive any care at all.

For the reasons stated above, the California Board of Naturopathic Medicine fully supports the regulation of naturopathic medicine in the state of Alaska and urges the passage of SB 44, not only for the benefit of consumers, but also for the protection of the public.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 928-5862 or by email at Rebecca.Mitchell@dca.ca.gov.

Kind regards,



Rebecca Mitchell
Executive Officer
California Board of Naturopathic Medicine
Department of Consumer Affairs