

Konrad Jackson

From: K Mitchell <kmitchellfacp@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, March 17, 2023 3:01 PM
To: Sen. Jesse Bjorkman
Subject: Proposed Naturopath expansion of practice - SB 44

Jesse Bjorkman

First of all - congratulations on your new role.
I don't think we have met together in person since the campaign.
It's exciting to see the energy from the Peninsula delegation.

As a physician on the peninsula, and the Secretary of ASMA, the Alaska State Medical Association, I wanted to provide a perspective on SB44. As currently written, I think it is dangerous to the public because it grants authority to prescribe medications and manage complex medical testing to naturopaths who do not have adequate training to do those things safely. I was part of the working group that reviewed and provided input on the proposed bill last session (Sen Kawasaki was working on it then) and have spent hours reviewing and commenting on the proposed legislation.

As a Legislator, I see one of your essential roles as promoting evidence-based safety standards to protect the public. Just as you would not advocate licensing someone without proper training to engineer or construct a bridge or a road or a school building, you should not endorse the expansion of Naturopaths to provide medical care.

Naturopath training focuses on botanical remedies to support health. There is a role for this perspective for patients who seek alternative or complementary care for their health, and patients should be free to seek this alternative. The State of Alaska should not however, through its scope of practice legislation, imply to the public that Naturopath training and expertise is equivalent to that of a medically trained primary care physician.

The hours spent in naturopathic school understanding the complexities of modern pharmacology are limited, there is no standard for residency training to follow classroom learning, and there is no formal national process to ensure continuing medical education or maintenance of certification as there is for board-certified physicians. The oversight body proposed in this bill would consist of a 5 person board - 3 naturopaths, and two members of the public. This seems grossly inadequate, especially as the bill explicitly states that "**the department may not make a 25 finding of professional incompetence solely on the basis that a licensee's practice 26 is unconventional or experimental.**"

I know many physician constituents would also be happy to talk with you about why this legislation in its current form is not in the best interest of the Peninsula or of Alaska.

I would be happy to meet in person to discuss these issues in more detail, or answer additional questions by email.

Thanks for taking the time to consider this seriously. Patient health and safety is so important.

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