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Please support HB 266 and SB 175

Naturopathic medicine is a system of healing that blends traditional natural therapies with current scientific advances. Alaska first licensed Naturopathic Doctors in 1987. Since that time, the governance of naturopathic medicine has been under the direct control of the Division of Professional Licensing.

Although the Alaska Legislature did not authorize the full scope of Naturopathic practice as taught in the accredited schools, and permitted in other states, they did permit the following scope of practice (AS 08.45.200.):

(3) "naturopathy" means the use of hydrotherapy, dietetics, electrotherapy, sanitation, suggestion, mechanical and manual manipulation for the stimulation of physiological and psychological action to establish a normal condition of mind and body; in this paragraph, "dietetics" includes herbal and homeopathic remedies.

With the following prohibitions (AS 08.45.050):

A person who practices naturopathy may not
(1) give, prescribe, or recommend in the practice
(a) a prescription drug;
(b) a controlled substance;

The Division of Professional Licensing adopted the following regulation 18 years ago clarifying that prescription "drugs" did NOT include natural medicines and would not be prohibited (12 AAC 42.990):

'Prescription drug' does not include a device or herbal or homeopathic remedy or dietetic substance in a form that is not a controlled substance.

With the further clarification that herbal remedies included:

Medicines derived from or a concentrate or extract of a plant, tree, root, moss, fungus, or other natural substances; "herbal remedy" does not include controlled substances

This 26 year old statute and 18 year old regulations are clear. However, the Division of Professional Licensing has recently taken the position that Naturopathic Doctors can not use any items that require a prescription. As a result, Naturopathic patients have been cut off from many vital therapies including things as simple as B12 shots and many natural, herbal medicines that are the foundation of Naturopathic medicine.

Please support HB 266 and SB 175 that takes one sentence from the current regulations (medicines derived from or a concentrate or extract of a plant, tree, root, moss, fungus, or other natural substance) and places it into the statute so that thousands of Naturopathic patients can continue to receive the same level of care they have for the past two decades.

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