

# KENAI LEGISLATIVE INFORMATION OFFICE

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## WRITTEN TESTIMONY

NAME: Annette Pankoski

REPRESENTING: \_\_\_\_\_ Self \_\_\_\_\_

BILL#/ SUBJECT: \_\_\_\_\_ HB266 \_\_\_\_\_

COMMITTEE &

HEARING DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ HLAC 022912 \_\_\_\_\_

Hello Representative Olson,

I have been made aware of the above referenced Bills currently in front of the State Legislature that address the ability of naturopaths to prescribe.

I feel this effort is being made by the medical community as an attempt to put the naturopaths out of commission and take our personal rights away to choose our health care providers.

It has been stated to me that members of the Board at Central Peninsula General Hospital believe there should be a governing body over the naturopaths as there is over the medical community (AMA), and the chiropractors. I have noticed that as the Bills are written the board would be assigned by the Governor and would consist of Naturopaths, Pharmacists, and a medical doctor. It is my understanding that if all the criteria set by these bills (implemented by the medical community) were not met then the naturopaths would not be allowed to receive a license to practice.

The reason this is of great concern to me is that I don't believe the medical community should be directing what we as individuals desire to chose for our health care. It should be our own decision. Most insurance companies do not pay for alternative health care, and I don't believe the government pays for alternative health care as well.

Therefore, as "self-pay"; should we not be able to receive the treatment we desire outside of the medical community?

A personal example of this would be as follows:

(1) I desired to have a sonogram instead of a mammogram. I was told by the hospital that I was not allowed to do so. I had to have the mammogram first and then my doctor could decide if I could get the sonogram. Why? Shouldn't I, as a "self-pay" be able to get the test I want?

(2) My husband was having chest pains. After visiting with our naturopathic doctor, it was recommended he get an "EKG". To get the script for the EKG we had to go to our Medical Doctor, as the doctors on the Board at CPGH decided that no scripts from Naturopaths would be honored. After two EKGs and a Treadmill test, he showed no signs of heart problems. He was treated by a doctor of natural medicine (not our medical doctor) and regained his health without any prescription medicine.

(3) I have a family history of osteoporosis and needed a script for a bone density test. I had to go to Anchorage to get it from Providence Hospital since the board at CPGH has ruled that no scripts will be accepted by naturopaths.

The board at CPGH is hurting CPGH fiscally since people like me are having to go to ANY of the other hospitals in the state for their tests. CPGH is the only one to not honor our naturopaths and now they are trying to implement a controlling set of bills that would take our right to choose our health care provider away.

I urge you to not pass these bills.

You can reach me for any questions at 907-398-8792.

Thank you for your consideration and time.

Respectfully yours,

Annette Pankoski

P.O. Box 2257

Soldotna, AK 99669

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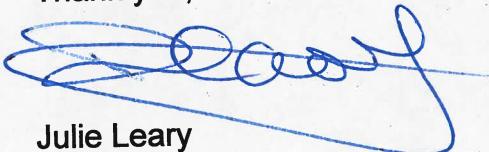
February 29, 2012

Dear House Labor and Commerce Committee:

I support both SB175 and HB266. I value the choice I have in choosing my health care professional. I have always had excellent care with naturopath health professionals, and have never been harmed. I have suffered with neck and shoulder pain issues for many years. I have seen both medical and naturopathic health care professionals for this. Several times I have attempted to make appointments with medical doctors only to be told that they could see me in a month.

With excruciating pain what choices do I have – I could go to the emergency room and get narcotic painkillers, or I could go to a naturopathic doctor who could see me that same day, or the next. They not only can relieve my pain with botanical medicine, and/or injectable vitamins, but also spend time trying to figure out the cause. In the past these procedures along with acupuncture have enabled me to get on with my life, including going to work, and caring for my family; I didn't need time recuperating from expensive surgery, and have any ill effects from narcotic pain medicine. No one wants to be unhealthy and suffering in pain. There are more options than surgery, and/or narcotic pain medication. I deserve that choice.

Thank you,



Julie Leary  
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House Bill 266  
House Labor & Commerce  
2/29/12

Chair Olsen and Honorable members of the House Labor & Commerce Committee.

My name is Mary Minor and I am a naturopathic doctor in Fairbanks, AK. I graduated from Bastyr University as a naturopathic doctor in 1983 and have been in practice for 28 years. I have held licenses in Washington State, Connecticut and, since 1990 in Alaska.

I am testifying in support of House Bill 266.

For the past eight years I have been active in attempting to bring our scope of practice up to our level of training and on par with other licensed states. That is not what brings me here today. I have never been to Juneau with a greater sense of urgency than I feel now. The reason for this is simple. Patient care is suffering.

It has been my good fortune to have worked with many Alaskans over the years in a variety of settings. I have run my own offices and been part of a multidisciplinary team of medical doctors, nurse practitioners, physician's assistants and allied health professionals.

Regardless of the setting, the goal does not change—provide appropriate care to those who seek my help. If I can't help this patient, I send them to someone who can.

My roll-o-dex is a crucial piece of equipment in my office.

In the past year and for reasons that I can not adequately explain, my abilities to care for my patients has been limited. I have been in the uncomfortable position of telling patients that I cannot provide the treatments that have been effective for them in the past because I can't get the required medicines. I can't tell them to go to their conventional provider for these services either. Although I am well trained and have extensive clinical experience with these medicines, they are foreign to most conventionally trained providers. They don't know what it is, what it does, what its indications are or what its counter-indications are. No ethical provider is going to go along with providing a therapy that is outside of their training. My patients are just plain out of luck and to call the situation frustrating is an understatement. This is not a turf issue. This is about access to appropriate care.

House Bill 266 will allow me to continue to practice as I have for the past 20 years. While I feel as strongly as ever a need to update our current scope of practice, that is not my purpose today. On behalf of my colleagues and the communities we serve, please pass this bill through so that we can all get back to what we do best. Treat patients.

Thank-you for your attention.