



## Senator Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

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## SB 193 Sponsor Statement

*"An Act relating to the practice of naturopathy and providing for an effective date."*

Alaska is suffering from a critical shortage of medical primary care providers while at the same time restricting several medical professions from practicing to the full extent of their training. Senate Bill 193 addresses this situation by allowing licensed Alaskan naturopathic doctors to apply for a temporary endorsement to practice closer to their level of education and training by being able to prescribe certain drugs to their patients. SB 193 will ensure that Alaskans that choose naturopathy as their medical service will still receive the highest level of care and help to alleviate the shortage of primary care providers in the state.

Approximately 50 licensed naturopaths provide effective care for thousands of Alaskans with chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, and hypertension in an overburdened healthcare system. However, the current limitations on naturopathic care require patients to schedule duplicate appointments for prescriptions increasing healthcare congestion and costs.

SB 193 allows licensed naturopaths to obtain a temporary license endorsement through a written agreement with a supervising physician. This endorsement prohibits the prescription of controlled substances, chemotherapy drugs, antipsychotic drugs, radioactive substances, and performing invasive surgeries. After one year under this agreement, licensed Alaskan naturopaths may get an ongoing endorsement linked to the regular licensing renewal process. The legislation requires all licensed Alaska naturopaths to complete sixty hours of continuing education every two years, including twenty hours focused on pharmacotherapy. Furthermore SB 193 authorizes state licensing personnel to suspend or revoke an endorsement after investigating a complaint against a licensed naturopath. The legislation also makes prescribing medicine without an endorsement illegal and addresses fraudulent actions to obtain an endorsement.

While the practice of naturopathic medicine emphasizes holistic disease prevention and treatment rather than treating symptoms solely with medications, the profession recognizes there are circumstances when treatment of a patient's condition will warrant intervention with medication in conjunction with other holistic approaches. SB 193 would allow these highly trained individuals to prescribe those medications to their patients. Naturopathic care offers affordable and positive health outcomes for patients, insurers, and the state while providing Alaskans the opportunity to select the type of healthcare that best suits their needs.

Please join me in supporting Senate Bill 193.