

## Statement Supporting SB70 and HB282

I am testifying as a consumer of health care. For the last 25 years, the primary health care providers for my family have been naturopathic doctors. We have been successfully treated for numerous ailments, including sinus infections, earaches, urinary tract infections, and insomnia. I have worked with a number of naturopaths and have found them all to be extremely competent and highly professional.

As far as I am concerned, this legislation should be completely non-controversial. Every other state on the West Coast has a Naturopathic Board. Naturopaths are highly trained health care providers whose focus is on wellness, education and prevention. It seems to me that this is exactly the kind of health care that we need more of.

I have heard that some members of the medical community are concerned that ND's might practice outside of their area of competence. I think this is a red herring. There is no evidence this has been a problem in other states. And I am not aware that it has been a problem in Alaska either.

I can tell you from my own experience that the NDs I have worked with are well aware of their limitations, and have referred me to other providers when that was appropriate.

In fact, a few years ago, I came back from a trip to Africa with a bad case of what I thought was traveler's diarrhea. I had been staying in a place with notoriously bad water and had gotten the runs from drinking the water earlier in my trip.

After several days, I wasn't getting any better and was experiencing alternating fever and chills. It was a naturopathic doctor, Emily Kane, who recognized that I might have something more serious. So she came over to my house during her lunch hour and drew my blood and sent it away to be tested for malaria. It came back positive the next day.

I went to Bartlett hospital and ultimately ended up at the University of Washington Hospital in Seattle to be treated for a nasty case of cerebral malaria. It was because of Dr. Kane's alert intervention that I was diagnosed with a life threatening condition in time to be successfully treated.

Two things about this. Number one, it illustrates the highly personalized form of medical care that is typical of the naturopathic profession. How many doctors do you know who make house calls? Yet Dr. Kane is not the first naturopath to make a house call at my house.

Number two, it is an example of a naturopath making a correct diagnosis and referring a patient to appropriate care. Dr. Kane did not suggest that I treat my cerebral malaria with colloidal silver or wormwood. She urged me to go to the hospital and get treated. And when it turned out that Bartlett hospital did not have the appropriate drugs or expertise to treat my condition, I was transferred to the University of Washington, where I had the good fortune to be treated by one of the leading malaria experts in North America.

ND's clearly have a role to play in our health care system. They are primary care providers who can treat many if not most of the common conditions that people go to a doctor for. The care they provide is personalized, cost effective, and prevention oriented.

Perhaps most important, it is focused on individuals taking responsibility for their own wellness. I firmly believe that we will never get medical costs under control until we acknowledge that all of us need to start taking better care of ourselves. Helping people do this is one thing NDs do best.

I urge you to support this legislation.

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