



The Alaska State Legislature  
House Labor and Commerce Committee  
March 9, 2010

HB 282  
Submitted by  
Karen E. Howard  
Executive Director  
American Association of Naturopathic Physicians

Dear Chairman and Members of the Committee:

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) wishes to express its support for HB 282, creating a permanent oversight board to manage an expanded scope of practice for licensed naturopathic physicians. AANP is the only national professional organization representing licensed naturopathic doctors.

The American Medical Association and the Alaska State Medical Board have gone on record opposing this legislation. The rationale for this opposition is based on information contained in a 2009 data profile created by the AMA. This report is summarily flawed in its origins and subsequent conclusions due to the following inadequacies, to name a few:

- Incomplete understanding and articulation of the education and training of naturopathic doctors.
- Dated, inaccurate and biased statements relating to the definition of the practice of naturopathic medicine, and state laws defining title and scope, including the authority to practice as primary care doctors.
- Misrepresentation of the profession of naturopathic medicine and its relation to people who practice with no formal training.

At the request of the AMA, we provided documentation of the numerous errors, inaccuracies and omissions contained the report. These changes have not been incorporated in the report and provided to the Alaska legislature. This misrepresentation of an established profession stands as example of the current campaign to restrict the State of Alaska's ability to address the severe physician shortage and declining health status of its residents.

The AMA Scope of Practice Partnership is unfortunate and divisive, antiquated in its information and blind to the changing course of patient-centered and directed care. This expenditure of valuable resources should instead be directed towards patients and the reform of our disease-based system to one that empowers individual health.

The attached document provides current and relevant information on the practice and education of naturopathic physicians. Additional information can be provided to you regarding the AANP, naturopathic medicine, and of course the AMA Scope of Practice data profile on naturopathic physicians.

AANP is committed to collaboration among all health professions, and believes that decaying health status of U.S. citizens requires our leadership - both as individuals, and as professions. Let me close with a quote from an Oregon legislator, who I feel sums up the state of affairs regarding scope of practice for all states fighting today's health care crises.

*"This testimony moves me to make a comment I probably shouldn't be making. I'm surprised in such a short session with how frustrated I am with the interprofessional rivalries that seem to go on. MDs vs. naturopaths. Psychologists vs. psychiatrists. Optometrists vs. ophthalmologists. Massage therapists vs. physiotherapists or something like this. We have created these silos, and created such heavy bricks around them, that it seems very hard for professions to see beyond the threat of somebody else coming into their territory. And it just seems to me that as long as we are blinded by this kind of interprofessional rivalry and silos, we are going to have a very difficult time creating the workforce of the future, which is what I hope in this session and next session we really begin thinking about. We turn these issues into political issues – count the votes, and if I win, you lose, and if I win, you lose, and it causes me a great deal of distress."*

*Chairman Mitch Greenlick  
Oregon House of Representatives  
Health Care Committee  
February 10, 2010*