

Ashley Strauch

From: Robert Nethken <rjnethken@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, April 19, 2019 5:20 PM
To: House Labor and Commerce
Subject: HB91

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To whom it may concern,

I do not support HB91 as I have not had a positive encounter with my local naturopath.

I do not support this bill because in late 2018 I went to a local naturopath in Fairbanks for help coping with stress and anxiety, where a blood draw was done and sent to Labcorp for testing. Labcorp ran my tests as a female (I am a male) and notified the naturopath I was seeing, who notified me that I needed to see a physician immediately. It was only after additional medical expenses were incurred at another provider did I find out that my tests results were skewed and there was no emergency. When I contacted my naturopath about this issue, and the financial burdens placed upon me by Labcorp, I was met with evasive answers and outright refusal to help.

My point is the referring naturopath did not properly read my test results in their entirety which I view as a failure of Section 6 of HB91. If my naturopath cannot take the time to fully read, and potentially spot mistakes, in an accredited testing facilities' report I do not believe they are fulfilling their public health duties. And this is why I do not support this bill.

- R. Nethken

Ashley Strauch

From: Alfred Randolph Lewis <randylewislcsw@alaska.net>
Sent: Monday, April 22, 2019 10:18 AM
To: House Labor and Commerce
Subject: HB91

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear Representatives,

I do not support increased scope of services for Naturopathic doctors and neither does my insurance company (Heath Care Exchange plan: HSA Silver (BSBC)). Unless and until there are double blind studies that their remedies improve health, naturopaths should not be granted additional status.

Sincerely,

Randy Lewis, LCSW

FLT LLC
Randy Lewis, LCSW
~~Ph: (907) 457-1128~~
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Ashley Strauch

From: laurie montano <lmlalderson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, April 24, 2019 11:33 AM
To: Deneen Tuck
Subject: HB 91 opposition

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Anchorage Representatives,

I am writing to oppose HB 91 which expands the scope of practice of naturopathic doctors.

I am an internal medicine physician and pediatrician and this scares me. I have a two physician practice in Anchorage and see patients of all ages from newborn to elderly. I have been practicing here for almost 17 years. I have seen many instances where a naturopathic medicine physician (an MD - there is one in Anchorage) and nurse practitioners have prescribed medications that have caused harm. I will explain two of those situations in detail.

One was a woman who was diagnosed by the naturopathic MD with an underlying inflammatory process that was not science based and was subjected to a year of IV antibiotic treatment that was not medically appropriate or necessary. She had complications from this such as ongoing yeast infections. The cost to her and to her insurance company must've been enormous.

Another more common problem I see is naturopathic providers prescribing thyroid medication for patients who do not need it. This has caused two of my patients to develop anxiety, panic attacks and heart palpitations. This can progress to dangerous irregular heart rhythms.

I see naturopathic doctors doing many unnecessary labs and prescribing medications that are not appropriate or science based. If we want to control the cost of our health care, this is not the way forward.

Please oppose this bill. I will be giving telephone testimony on May 3 as well, and please call me with any questions you have about this.

Thank you for your time,
Laurie Montano, MD

~~907-841-1593~~

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Laurie Montano Alderson

I am writing to oppose HB 91, the proposed expansion of the scope of practice for naturopaths. I will be at a state-wide annual continuing medical education meeting on May 3, so I will be unable to testify in-person or by phone on the date of the hearing.

As an internal medicine physician, board certified by the American Board of Internal Medicine, I have strong objections to expanding the scope of practice for individuals with insufficient training to understand the risks and benefits of scientific medical therapies. Over my twenty years in practice in Alaska, I have encountered numerous incidents of patient harm caused by medical advice which does not meet the standard of care.

Due to patient confidentiality regulations, I cannot provide full patient-specific details, but I have seen many cases of injury to patients by naturopaths. Here are a few representative examples:

- A patient who was over-treated with 'natural' thyroid supplements who suffered the serious cardiac complication of atrial fibrillation as a predictable consequence.

- A patient with a disorder that predisposed them to blood clot formation who was advised by their naturopath to stop their anticoagulation medication in favor of a 'natural' alternative, and subsequently suffered a large stroke. In my professional opinion, this stroke was preventable, had the patient continued their effective, medically prescribed anticoagulant.

- A case of life-threatening toxic shock syndrome caused by intravaginal administration of naturopathic therapy.

- Advice to new mothers to put herbs and powders on the umbilical cord stump, a practice which is associated with increased rates of life-threatening oomphalitis.

- Opposition to vaccination, which puts individuals and the entire community at risk of measles, pertussis, influenza, and other preventable diseases. I have seen a school vaccine exemption form completed by a naturopath, although the Alaska state regulation clearly states that medical exemption forms should be completed by a licensed medical practitioner.

Board-certified medical physicians complete four years of medical school training, a minimum of three years of medical residency, and take a rigorous, nationally standardized secure examination to certify their ongoing maintenance of medical knowledge. Additionally, licensed physicians in Alaska are required to demonstrate completion of continuing medical education credits. Medicine is complex and the nature of scientific understanding of diseases continues to evolve as new studies are published. The field of scientific medicine requires specialized rigorous training to comprehend and to stay up to date with current standards of care. Naturopathic training focuses on health promotion, and can be complimentary to, but is not equivalent to primary care medical training, and is not designed to prepare students for the practice of scientific medicine.

The supplemental material attached to the HB 91 bill includes a statement that naturopaths graduate with 'more than 4000 hours' of training and clinical rotations. In contrast, according to the American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) US medical students on average complete an average of 157 weeks of training before they go on to complete an additional 3-7 years of residency clinical training. This equates to more than 6000 hours (at 40 hours per

week) during medical school, plus residency training, where work hours are capped at 80 hours per week. An estimate of residency duty hours, with 4 weeks of vacation/sick time, works out to up to an additional 11,500 hours of clinical training over three years. This works out to more than four times the numbers of hours of training reported by the naturopaths.

In the interest of protecting public health, I urge you as legislators to vote against HB 91.

If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Kristin M Mitchell, MD FACP
Peninsula Internal Medicine
WWAMI 3rd year clerkship site director, Soldotna
Clinical Assistant Professor of Medicine, University of Washington

Ashley Strauch

From: John Finley, MD <JFinley@alaskaheart.com>
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2019 4:33 PM
To: Rep. Adam Wool
Subject: HB 91

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

Dear Representative Wool:

As a Medical Doctor practicing in Alaska for 44 years, I sincerely hope the item D, line 31 of page 3 of HB91 does not suggest naturopaths are to be allowed to prescribe prescription drugs. Their training is regarding herbal and plant medication, not in prescription medications or in surgery.

Furthermore, schools of naturopathy are far less scrutinized by regulation bodies and are less competitive regarding admission. Naturopaths do not have the years of postdoctoral training required of Medical Doctors and Doctors of Osteopathy to be allowed to practice. Medical Doctors and Doctors of Osteopathy further are subject of ongoing scrutiny by various regulating bodies and boards as well.

In my years of practice in Alaska, my observation is that non-physician practitioners may actually increase the cost of medical care by ordering unnecessary testing procedures due to insecurity regarding their clinical impressions. That expense I believe would extend to naturopaths ordering inappropriate tests and procedures as well.

Ultimately, if medicine prescription privileges and surgical privileges are given to all who apply, why should future physicians bother to spend the years and money to become bona fide physicians?

Yours truly,

John C Finley, MD, FACC, FASE

Ashley Strauch

From: Michelle Laufer <laufermichelle@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2019 4:54 PM
To: Rep. Adam Wool
Subject: naturopaths

Rep Wool

I am a pediatrician writing to encourage you to reject proposed changes to the scope of practice for naturopaths in Alaska.

Naturopaths are trained to prescribe natural and therapeutic substances and therapies. Perhaps they have their place in the healing community. However, those trained as naturopaths are not adequately trained to evaluate or manage serious or life-threatening disease. The problem is that when a patient presents to the doctor, they do not generally show up with a sign saying "I have a serious illness." It is up to the clinician, based on training and experience, to identify and investigate even common complaints for serious conditions when indicated. I often tell people that it is my job to worry about the worst case scenario and decide when we need to investigate further. Fortunately, most of the time I am able to reassure parents and patients, but sometimes experience and training tells me otherwise and this level of training and experience is not part of naturopathic training.

The most egregious case I have been involved with was of a patient brought to a naturopath for headaches. She was prescribed herbs, massage and an alternative touch therapy. A few months into the unresolving and worsening headache when she could not take the pain any longer she presented to the emergency room where she was diagnosed with an advance brain tumor and died days later. It was not even on this family's radar that this headache could indicate more serious disease. And it was not on that naturopath's radar either. This is out of their scope of practice. But the family thought they were seeing a "doctor" so did not seek further advice.

The public is confused by the word "doctor" already as it applies to naturopaths. I encounter this confusion by patients at least monthly. Allowing the use of the term "physician" will only further muddle the picture. People generally do not know or take the time to investigate their providers and are confused when I tell that that the person they saw was a naturopath.

Our patients deserve to trust the state's licensing procedure for medical providers. Allowing the changes delineated in HB 91 undermines this trust by further muddling the definition of those who are trained through medical school and residency, and those who are trained as alternative providers. This puts our patients at risk.

Thanks,
Michelle Laufer, MD

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Michelle Laufer, MD

Ashley Strauch

From: Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux
Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 8:31 AM
To: Deneen Tuck
Subject: FW: House Bill 91

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

FYI in L&C

From: Phyllis Kiehl <pkiehlak@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2019 8:29 PM
To: Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux <Rep.Gabrielle.LeDoux@akleg.gov>
Subject: Re: House Bill 91

Dear Representative LeDoux,

As an Alaskan physician, pediatrician, with 43 years of experience treating patients in Anchorage, I urge you to vote No on House Bill 91, which would enable Naturopaths to prescribe and do minor surgeries. Naturopaths have 4 years of training after college, but this is in no way equivalent to the training of allopathic physicians or osteopaths. Their 2 years of "basic science" courses are not equivalent, and their 2 years after that are not either. Their training and supervised experience is nowhere near that of MD and DO physicians, and they should not call themselves physicians.

Naturopathy has a role complementary to traditional medical practice, but naturopaths do not have the training or experience to take the place of medical practice. Using dietary and natural treatments to support health is excellent. It should not supplant proven effective treatments.

Naturopaths unfortunately have promoted some treatments in lieu of proven ones, and some have discouraged patients from using appropriate therapies. Some have even discouraged immunization to prevent serious contagious diseases.

Please vote No on House Bill 91.

Respectfully,
Phyllis S. Kiehl, M.D., FAAP

Ashley Strauch

From: Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux
Sent: Tuesday, April 30, 2019 8:35 AM
To: Deneen Tuck
Subject: FW: Naturopath Credentials

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

FYI

From: dmemd2@aol.com <dmemd2@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, April 29, 2019 9:46 PM
To: Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux <Rep.Gabrielle.LeDoux@akleg.gov>
Subject: Naturopath Credentials

Ms LeDoux:

I would like to voice my strong opposition to any expansion of naturopath credentials. I have been in practice in Anchorage since 1995, am triple board certified by American Board of Medical Specialists (Pediatrics, Otolaryngology, and Facial Plastics and Reconstructive Surgery.) I have seen many patients through the years that engaged with various naturopaths, and can state unequivocally from assessing the care provided that the practice of naturopathy is not based on science, is not rigorously studied, and has not provided any patients any benefits that I am aware of. When I first encountered naturopathic medicine I undertook, out of curiosity and to better understand the concepts of the practice, an in depth evaluation of their training and philosophies. What I found dismayed me immensely, and I could find little that would lead me to support that school of thought.

With the recent urge of naturopaths to expand into prescribing allopathic medicines and to do minor surgeries I again looked into their training, and still find nothing that supports that position. I've attached a revealing evaluation written by a former naturopath who became disillusioned by the lack of science and the incredibly thin record of training offered by Bastyr School of Naturopathy. This is a quick read about the true nature of naturopathic education. It sounds essentially self-taught, with little or no exposure to illnesses seen in clinical practice, no experience in prescribing allopathic medication, and little or no surgical training.

<https://sciencebasedmedicine.org/nd-confession-part-1-clinical-training-inside-and-out/>

This confirms in my mind that naturopaths should NOT be given any further credentials than they already have.

I am also frustrated at the continued efforts by non-physicians to try to label themselves as "doctor." Yes, a PhD is a doctor, but not a medical doctor. Using this term in relationship to clinical/medical care is misleading to the public and should not be allowed for any practitioners other than MD (medical doctors), DO (doctors of osteopathy), or DDS (doctor of dental surgery.) Any other utilization in the medical/clinical field amounts to suggesting to the public that whatever degree is being referenced is equivalent to those practitioners. It is misleading and inappropriate.

Thank you very much for your considerations.

Dwight M Ellerbe MD, FAAP, FACS
Alaska Center for Ear Nose and Throat, ACENT

My name is Mary Ann Foland. I am a family physician in Anchorage since 1977 and I oppose HB 91. Like most family physicians, I treat the whole patient with focus on prevention. It is important to know that this is not a turf issue, a workforce or access to care issue. There are only 60 naturopaths in this state. Many think you go to medical school and can either choose to be a neurosurgeon or a naturopath. That is simply not true. You do have access to information and policy statements from the American Academy of Family Physicians, the Alaska Academy of Family Physicians and the Alaska State Medical Association describing the difference. Kevin Jardel has given you the scope of practice wheel that compares the extra 12,000 to 15,000 hours of training for a physician, versus the hours needed to become a naturopath. You also have the 50 Page AMA evaluation that compares training for M.D., D.O., and naturopaths. The State Medical Board also opposes this bill and considers these changes as the practice of allopathic medicine. They feel this is not appropriate and not safe for the public. They have opposed this every time in the past and they will continue to oppose it.

I have some stories to share from the perspective of one physician in Anchorage:

I know of at least three Type I insulin dependent diabetic patients who were taken off their insulin by their naturopath. They were treated with diet and supplements. One of them was 14 weeks pregnant. Her A1c was over 11 and should be under 6, reflecting the fact that her blood sugar was in the 300 range. This is a huge risk for birth defects to the unborn child.

I know a physician who was distraught to tell a patient that the tissue she was losing vaginally tested positive for endometrial cancer. This is a late sign of progression for this disease. However, he was shocked that the patient was happy that the treatment her naturopath was giving her was working and allowing her body to expel the cancer cells.

There is a naturopath who injected phenol for back pain. None of the specialists I have talked to have any clue about why that would be recommended. She collapsed the patient's lung. He needed to be hospitalized for a chest tube to re-expand his lung. This is performed with the tube about the diameter of your thumb put in between the ribs and connected to suction to re-expand that lung. This naturopath did this twice. She is still practicing.

In my practice, a patient was referred to the allergy and immunology office in Anchorage. She was diagnosed with sensitivity to formaldehyde. This is not IgE mediated and therefore cannot be desensitized with allergy shots. The recommendation is to avoid formaldehyde and hope to eventually grow out of this sensitivity. The patient was then taken to a naturopath who reassured them that they would be glad to treat this by injecting small increasing amounts of formaldehyde. This patient is 9 years old.

A gynecologist I know had a middle-aged woman who is a smoker with hyperlipidemia and a history of coronary artery disease. She complained of low libido and was injected testosterone pellets. That resulted in a stroke. The American College of OB/GYN recommends that testosterone in high doses is never recommended for females.

A pediatrician who worked in Anchorage and also had a MPH moved out of state and decided to attend a naturopath school. He lasted less than two years. He felt he needed to quit because he was not allowed to ask any questions about the scientific basis for their recommendations. He felt it was faith-based and not a scientific evidence based program.

I am sure you will hear from many patients who love their naturopaths. That is fine, but not pertinent.

Naturopaths do not need to have prescriptive and surgical privileges. If their training is to be a naturopath, let them continue to be naturopaths and practice within the definition of Naturopathy. This relentless quest is the camel's nose under the tent for the issue of scope of practice. Please act to protect the health and safety of Alaska patients and do not pass this bill.

Thank you,
Mary Ann Foland
Mary Ann Foland, MD

Ashley Strauch

From: Hardy, Anp, Kathrine <KHardyAnp@Concentra.com>
Sent: Wednesday, May 01, 2019 1:03 PM
To: Hardy, Anp, Kathrine
Subject: Naturopathic Bill

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Good afternoon,

I am NOT in favor of lifting the current regulations regarding Naturopathic Practitioners. The degree they have pursued, and the practices they have built are based on different guidelines of treating patients. Their approach does not include prescription medications, minor surgeries, or other skills that are learned, and honed in other disciplines.

I am a Family Nurse Practitioner, in a large Family Medicine Practice, in Anchorage. I have been in practice for almost 20 years, both in Emergency Departments in TN, and AZ, as well as Internal Medicine, and Family Practices as well.

You will hear many stories, from MD's, DO's, NP's, PA's, naturopath's themselves, and many patients. There are very distinct differences in our practices, and the regulations that are being requested to be changed are not appropriate for their training.

Thank you for your time,

Kathrine Hardy, APRN
Family Nurse Practitioner

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Ashley Strauch

From: Leistikow, Corrine S. <Corrine.Lestikow@foundationhealth.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 02, 2019 8:17 AM
To: House Labor and Commerce
Subject: House Bill 91

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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I urge you to vote against House Bill 91. My understanding is this bill would basically grant naturopaths the same rights to practice medicine as physicians. My opinion is that if they want to practice medicine, they should go to medical school and do a residency program and get properly trained to do so. This bill would basically allow naturopaths to practice as medical doctors without adequate training. This would equate to medical malpractice. This bill should not even be considered and if passed, would present a significant danger to our patients who see naturopaths. Naturopaths would be prescribing medication and performing surgery to their patients without adequate training. This is not the answer to get more access to primary care in the state of Alaska. Please contact me if you have further questions. Thank you.

Corrine Leistikow MD
Medical Director Family Medicine
Tanana Valley Clinic
~~907-255-0000~~



Ashley Strauch

From: Buffington, Nathaniel J. <Nathaniel.Buffington@foundationhealth.org>
Sent: Thursday, May 02, 2019 1:50 PM
To: Rep. Grier Hopkins; House Labor and Commerce
Cc: Leistikow, Corrine S.
Subject: Vote against House Bill 91

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Representatives,

I am writing this email in response to the proposed House Bill 91. I understand this Bill requests the expansion of the scope of practice for naturopaths in the state of Alaska to basically practice as primary care physicians. To say that I think this is a bad idea would be an understatement.

FedEx does not allow their truck drivers to become pilots and their pilots to become truck drivers just because they want to do something different. They require them to have the proper training and certification for the job and demonstrate their ability prior to being hired for that job. Why would we entrust the healthcare of patients to someone without proper training practicing medicine outside their scope of practice?

The American Association of Naturopathic Medical Colleges' website reports a similar foundation of knowledge that they report is comparable to allopathic medical schools for the first two years of their training. From that point, there is a 'divergence' from allopathic medical school curriculum to focus on 'holistic and nontoxic approaches to therapy with a strong emphasis on disease prevention and optimizing wellness'. 'The third and fourth years of training distinguish naturopathic medical programs from traditional medical schools in several ways. Much of the ND curriculum is devoted to non-pharmacuetical/non-surgical approaches to managing patient conditions and students spend significant time studying lifestyle counseling, nutrition, and health promotion.'

I do not pretend to have the training in botanical medicine and homeopathy that naturopathic medicine emphasizes in their training. I practice what I was trained to do. I worked hard in college studying biomedical sciences and took the MCAT and did well on that exam. I applied to and was accepted into allopathic medical school and took care of patients for long hours during a three year family medicine residency under the tutelage and direct supervision of board certified family physicians. I am required to maintain my board certification regularly by sitting for board examinations and regularly participating in continuing medical education activities. In the meantime, I continue to treat my patients as I was trained to do while realizing my limitations and when to refer to subspecialists.

It is apparent to me that this bill is a request by some misguided naturopaths who are looking for a short-cut or end-around medical school and residency training. The bill also runs counter to the vision of the American Association of Naturopathic Medical Colleges to focus on 'holistic and nontoxic approaches to therapy with a strong emphasis on disease prevention and optimizing wellness'.

We already have educational pathways in place to allow health care providers to practice primary care. My advice to those naturopaths that want to expand their services is to get the proper training to do so. They could apply to nursing school, work in intensive care for two years and then apply to nurse practitioner school. They could also apply to allopathic or osteopathic medical school and apply to residency subsequently. They could also apply to physician assistant school.

House Bill 91 is a poorly written bill with potential adverse consequences to Alaskans. I strongly encourage you to vote against this bill.

Thank you for your consideration,

-Nate Buffington, MD – Tanana Valley Clinic, Fairbanks, Alaska