

Senate Bill 38: Background on Naturopathic Medicine

Naturopathic training focuses on disease prevention, rather than symptom and medication management. The training and methods of practice allow naturopathic doctors to give particular focus to obstacles to health and supports for patient wellness. Naturopathic practice gives special attention to challenges in diet, lifestyle, and stress management. The approach helps amplify the body's natural healing mechanisms through clinical nutrition, use of vitamins and minerals, and other supportive approaches. Naturopathic doctors are also trained to use conventional pharmacology as needed.

Naturopathic doctors attend four-year post graduate medical programs accredited by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME), an accreditation organization recognized by the US Department of Education. These programs include the basic biomedical sciences as well as natural approaches to care, including extensive nutrition, botanical, and lifestyle prescription. Licensed NDs have attended schools accredited by CNME. All accredited naturopathic medical schools are four-year programs.

Accredited naturopathic medical schools include a minimum of 4,100 hours of class and clinical training. Prerequisites for admission are substantively similar to those for allopathic medical school (biological sciences, including genetics and microbiology, basic and organic chemistry, physics, math, etc.), with the exception of the MCAT. In addition to a standard medical curriculum, schools require their graduates to complete four years of training in disciplines such as clinical nutrition, botanical medicine, physical medicine, and counseling. During the final two years of their program, naturopathic medical students hold externships in clinical settings under the close supervision of licensed professionals.

In addition to that available in clinical practice, naturopathic care is routinely included in the integrative health offerings of large medical groups in many U.S. states. In Washington State, for example, naturopathic doctors are included in the integrative medicine programs of the [Providence Health System](#), the [Seattle Cancer Care Alliance](#), the [Swedish Cancer Institute](#).