

Dear Ms Costello,

4/7/2021

I am currently a hospitalist and medical director of the hospitalist service at Bartlett Regional Hospital. I have been a family physician for over 30 years and have worked extensively in both in-patient and out-patient medicine. I have worked in Juneau Alaska for 11 years, and prior to that practiced in North Carolina for Duke and UNC. I am a member of Alaska State Medical Association.

I am most concerned about the bill allowing for naturopaths to prescribe allopathic medications. To start, given that most naturopaths typically do not practice nor endorse allopathic medicine, it eludes me why they would want to be able to prescribe other than for financial incentive. In my opinion, the safety of the patient is not forefront in their request or in the decision to allow for this activity.

The education for physicians (primary care) is extensive. During the first 2 years of medical school, we are taught the science. The last 2 years are spent caring for patient with close supervision. Then, we are required to do an internship for one year which typically involves up to 80 hours per week of patient care with supervision. Only then can we get a license to practice medicine, however the majority of physicians finish a 3-year residency. Compare this to the education of naturopaths. This proposal would grant independent prescription authority to Naturopaths after four years of naturopathic education. Physicians cannot independently prescribe after four years of science based allopathic instruction. Not until after they have completed their internship does the State of Alaska allow independent prescriptive authority. Nor would we advocate for such authority given the importance of what we learn during that time. Granting them prescribing privileges is in my opinion dangerous and irresponsible.

Over the last 10 years, I have cared for patients who have visited naturopaths. I find that there is misinformation regarding allopathic medicine that patients are getting from these naturopaths. I have on more than one occasion had to care for a patient that had been harmed from this misinformation.

Thank you for considering my position on prescribing privileges for naturopaths.

Mignon F Benjamin, MD