

Alaska State Legislature

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Senate Bill 44 Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to the practice of naturopathy; establishing the Naturopathy Advisory Board; relating to the licensure of naturopaths; relating to disciplinary sanctions for naturopaths; relating to the Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; and providing for an effective date."

Senate Bill 44 establishes a clear scope of practice for Alaska naturopathic doctors and will allow these primary healthcare providers to practice consistent with their education and training.

The state's nearly 50 licensed naturopaths provide valuable healthcare services to thousands of Alaskans and can play an important role in helping address our current primary care provider shortage. However, our outdated statutes contain vague language that dictate the authorities of naturopaths; consequently, this lack of clarity and interpretation has led to the adoption of some of the most restrictive naturopathic medicine regulations in the nation.

Senate Bill 44 would set clear statutory guidelines, including, among other things, allowing licensed naturopathic practitioners to perform minor office procedures and to prescribe vitamins, minerals and other non-controlled substance medications. Naturopathic doctors practice safely in other states under the same scope of practice that this bill would allow.

Naturopathic medicine can provide valuable and complementary care in the Alaska health care setting for many Alaskans who struggle to find an accessible primary care physician. The ability for naturopaths to practice the scope of medicine consistent with their training would immediately expand the availability of primary care in Alaska.

Many Alaskans face challenges with chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes and hypertension that are issues for which Naturopaths are very equipped to treat. Their education focuses on disease prevention, rather than just treating symptoms and prescribing medications. In the long run, Naturopathic care will provide cost savings and improved health outcomes for patients, insurers and the state, while allowing Alaskans to choose the style of health care most suitable to them.

Please join me in support of Senate Bill 44.

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