

## Emails of Support for Senate Bill 44 – Naturopathy

02-20-23

Dear Senator Cathy Giessel,

My name is Robbin La Vine and I am writing to urge you to support Senate Bill 44 (SB 44), which updates the scope of practice for Naturopathic doctors to reflect their education and training.

**I am GRATEFUL for the thoughtful care I and my whole family have received through our naturopathic doctor.** We have received the full scope of a lifetime's worth of care. My doctor spends an hour with me during my annual visit, tracking changes and symptoms and developing a wellness plan that may include referrals to other healthcare specialists. The amount of time my doctor spends on assessment and check ins with me exceeds any I have experienced outside of their practice. I am lucky to have federal Blue Cross Blue Shield healthcare which covers this essential care. My father, who is on Medicare, does not have the luxury of selecting an attentive, single sourced practitioner as few are accepting Medicare and Medicare doesn't contract with naturopaths.

The changes proposed in SB 44 reflect a scope of practice that is being practiced safely and effectively by naturopathic doctors in many other states around the country. Given our unique healthcare challenges in Alaska, we should be leading the charge in pursuing policies which provide consumers with more options and greater access to affordable care.

Thank you in advance for your support of SB 44, and for taking one step toward better healthcare in our great state.

Sincerely, Robbin La Vine

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Hi, my name is Larry Emerton and I am writing in support of SB 44. I have a Naturopathic doctor as well as a GP and have had good care from both. I am a firm believer in integrative medicine and think that there is a place for both traditional and naturopathic medicine in Alaska. My Naturopath tends to look for the underlying cause of issues, rather than just treating symptoms and I have had good outcomes by digging deeper into the complaint. I am hoping that the legislature will see the value of the Naturopathic community and pass SB 44.

Thank you,  
Larry Emerton, Anchorage, AK

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Hello,

I am writing in my support of Senate Bill 44. This bill would streamline my medical care and reduce the number of appointments. Personally, it would be more comfortable for me to have a doctor I see regularly and know also be able to perform pap smears as well as birth control options like IUD insertion which in the past I had to go to another clinic because MD Wiggins was unable to provide this service.

Thank you for your time.

Ivy Ivanoff, Life-long Alaskan, home owner and Registered Nurse

Dear Representatives of Alaska,

I would like to express how important it is to pass SB44.

I have received incredible care from many naturopathic doctors. I seek naturopathic medicine as my primary care support system whenever I need to address a malady/disease I am experiencing. Not only do Naturopathic doctors find solutions to assist my body back into homeostatic balance, they also always take the time to educate me on future prevention techniques and lifestyle changes that will help me avoid issues from repeating. So important. This type of thorough holistic care is not something I have honestly EVER experienced when seeking medical help from the Western medical model of medicine. I value and need holistic health care, and these educated Naturopathic doctors need to be available and accessible in our communities, to better support and care for the health and well-being of Alaskans.

Thank you for helping to pass SB44 and supporting the health of Alaskans.

Best, Kaila Buerger

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To: Senator Cathy Giessel

Re: Support for Senate Bill 44

My name is Carla (Ky) Hollingsworth.

Please lend your vital support to Senate Bill 44 to establish a clear scope of practice for Naturopathic Doctors to match the level of education and training they receive.

Currently many states do allow Naturopathic doctors to use the complete scope of training. I sincerely want my Naturopathic Doctor to be able to do the same so that I can stop seeing two practitioners for my primary health care and medication prescriptions. When I have to use two providers this wastes my time, takes me away from work and family and increases healthcare costs by generating multiple appointments.

My son and I go to Naturopaths because they work in a preventative approach and have a wealth of nutritional knowledge far beyond what I experience with the Nurse practitioner I see for the prescriptions I need.

Alaska is facing a shortage of primary care providers. The US Department of Labor recognizes Naturopathic doctors as primary care physicians. This makes sense since naturopathic doctors graduate from federally accredited 4-year naturopathic medical programs with more than 4,000 hours of training and clinical rotations.

It isn't efficient that naturopathic doctors in Alaska have a more limited scope of practice than other health care providers in Alaska with equal or lesser training. Naturopathic doctors practice safely under the complete scope in many other states. The preventative focus of Naturopathic Doctors can directly affect the increasing prevalence of chronic and preventable health issues for Alaskans

Regulating naturopathic doctors appropriately will encourage more practitioners to move to Alaska and serve Alaskans. Naturopathic doctors qualify for Indian Health Service's national loan repayment program aimed to

increase access to remote Alaskans but are unable to make use of this program due to the currently limited scope of practice. Alaska's population is aging and we need to be able to care for our elders, whether in a big city or in rural areas.

Again, please support SB 44 to extend the scope of practice allowed for Naturopathic Doctors. It's one of the most safe and effective ways to address the need for health care in Alaska.

Thank you in advance for your support of SB 44.

Sincerely, Carla (Ky) Hollingsworth

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Dear Senator Geissel,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 44 (SB 44), which updates the scope of practice for Naturopathic doctors to reflect their education and training.

The changes proposed in SB 44 reflect a scope of practice that is being practiced safely and effectively by naturopathic doctors in many other states around the country. Given our unique healthcare challenges in Alaska, naturopaths should be leading the charge in pursuing policies which provide consumers with more options and greater access to affordable care.

My husband, our children, and I have received care from naturopaths in Juneau and in Seattle, Washington since our thirty-something year old children were in diapers. Naturopaths have served as our primary health providers through a large part of our lives. Dr. Neary in Juneau cared for our children's ear infections and bronchitis when they were little. Dr. Kane has provided guidance and care for my husband's Type II diabetes and Parkinson's Disease. She has steered us to alternative therapies, including Rock Steady Boxing, which has made a world of difference in his quality of life. For me, Dr. Kane provided essential care throughout menopause and the osteopenia which accompanied it. She offered prolotherapy when I faced a hip replacement, allowing me an additional four comfortable years of exercise and walking on my bone-on-bone hip, which was eventually replaced. We're very grateful for these doctors, who have made such significant contributions to the health and welfare of the members of our family.

In addition, my husband and I attended a "summer camp" for adults with Parkinson's Disease at Bastyr University in Kirkland, Washington for a week. Organized by Dr. Laurie Mischley, ND, the camp was a scholarly training course, taught by MDs and NDs from all over the country. It illustrated the breadth and depth of conventional medical and naturopathic practice coming together to make life better for Parkinson's patients. At the "camp," we explored exercise clinics, lectures on physiology and demonstrations of upcoming PD treatments and therapies. It was an extraordinary learning opportunity for us, as patient/caregiver, to benefit from a wide array of experts working together to better our lives. We'd rejoice to see this sort of event happen in Alaska, but first our state must recognize the depth of education and training our naturopaths bring to their work. And it is considerable!

Thank you in advance for your support of SB 44, and for taking one step toward better healthcare in our great state.

Sincerely, Luann McVey, Retired Alaskan Teacher [REDACTED] Douglas, Alaska. 99824

To: Senator Cathy Giessel,

My name is Cecil L. Moreno and I am writing to urge you to support SB 44. This Bill will greatly update the scope of practice for Naturopathic Doctors to reflect their education and training.

I have been receiving care from a Naturopathic Doctor for 39 years.

I have experienced medical support from Medical Senior Care Programs at Providence Hospital and Regional Hospital in Anchorage over the past years and with each experience, these programs have faltered and deactivated. I have been grateful for the continuous support of my Naturopathic Doctor. Unfortunately, even though the medical training of my Naturopathic Doctor is equal to many medical practitioners, I cannot obtain a prescription for medicines and must make additional appointments to obtain medicines for my health needs.

I also find my appointment needs are more readily met without the exceeding long delay of appointments with a Medical Program.

I appreciate your support of SB 44.

Respectfully,

Cecil L. Moreno

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Dear Senator Giessel

Thank you for sponsoring sensible legislation to quickly bring seasoned primary care providers to our great state. As you know Naturopathic Doctors are well trained as gate keeper providers and excel at orienting patients to renew commitments to basic parameters of good health: salutary diet, good sleep habits, regular exercise, positive attitude. Many conventionally trained doctors with high overhead including expensive malpractice insurance are constrained by time and cannot dig into the day-to-day habits of their patients, which often means the underlying cause of poor health are not uncovered, nor addressed.

I have been providing naturopathic medical services for 30 years in Juneau and I continue to have a busy practice despite basically providing service with one hand tied behind my back. Patients are so very hungry for health care which doesn't reflexively involve pharmaceuticals. My standard of care does not mandate a statin the minute a patient's total cholesterol reaches 200. As you well know, cardiovascular health (and disease) is significantly more complex than the number 200. This provides an example of why NDs build in much more time to their patient interactions than typical MDs can afford to.

For the CPT code 99214 I spend at least 60 minutes face to face with each patient. This allows me to discuss what they are eating, how they are sleeping, what they do for exercise, the details of their bowel function, etc. Working this is very satisfying both for me and for my patients.

However, occasionally I see an acute E. Coli UTI and need to prescribe Nitrofurantoin. It is so aggravating to have to refer the patient to urgent care or another provider, require them to spend another \$200, and delay care. NDs have on average 20-40% more training in pharmacology than nurse practitioners. However, NPs have a much broader scope of practice including full prescriptive authority. This is a political issue — nothing to do with competency. NPs simply have more lobby power. NDs are also thoroughly trained in minor surgery procedures and charge significantly less than an MD would for, say, removing a mole and sending it to pathology.

I appreciate your attention, and your advocacy for this worthy cause. Please call on me if I can provide further evidence or support.

Sincerely, Dr. Emily Kane, Juneau AK Cell (907) 723-5599 Be well! [www.DrEmilyKane.com](http://www.DrEmilyKane.com)

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To whom it may concern...

Senate Bill 44 provides licensed Naturopathic doctors to practice medicine in such a way that reflects their education and training, allowing them to perform minor office procedures like sutures, wart removal; and issue vitamins minerals and non-controlled prescription medications. The current Alaskan law severely limits the scope of practice for licensed Naturopathic doctors, and these laws do not reflect their education and training. The current restrictive scope of practice is more limited than other healthcare providers in the state with equal or lesser training. These limitations negatively affect our community's access to healthcare.

Licensed Naturopathic doctors are primary care doctors; however they must refer patients to other healthcare professionals for prescriptive treatments. This results in patients requiring two appointments and increases cost for medical care.

Due to limited availability of healthcare providers, patients must often wait long periods before obtaining the prescriptions or care that they require. These issues can easily be avoided by allowing Naturopathic doctors to practice to the extent of their training and skill. Senate Bill 44 reflects the scope of practice that is standard in many other states and allows Naturopathic doctors to successfully practice to the extent of their capability.

Dr. Wiggins was previously licensed in Arizona, and performed office procedures that include suturing wounds, removing toenails removing skin lesions, removing IUDs and administering injections and vaccines.

Additionally, she held a DEA license, permitting prescriptive authority for schedule II/III, IV, and V medications, in addition to all non-prescribed medications. In Alaska Dr. Wiggins is limited in her practice, and unable to assist her patients with any of the above. Dr. Wiggins' approach to medicine is to use the least invasive and most effective treatment modality for each healthcare concern. Much of the time, this can be provided without the use of medications. However, there are cases in which a prescriptive agent is appropriate treatment, In these cases, her patients should not have to see a separate provider, when Dr. Wiggins is trained, and knowledgeable, and able to provide needed care. Naturopathic doctors are trained to provide care for acute medical needs. However, without prescriptive authority, sick patients must often wait to get in with a new provider for antibiotics, etc.

Heather Poe RD, LD



