

TO: Senator Cathy Giessel
RE: Support for Senate Bill 44

Dear Senator Giessel,

My name is Joanie Waller and I thank you for sponsoring Senate Bill 44, which updates the scope of practice for Naturopathic doctors to reflect their education and training.

It is high time that Alaska updates its outdated state laws to the same level as other states and the US Dept of Labor in recognizing Licensed Naturopathic Doctors as primary-care physicians. Their training is on the same level as medical doctors, osteopathic doctors and nurse practitioners, yet current Alaska law prohibits them from working to the full extent of their scope of practice and limits them from providing comprehensive care for their patients.

I have gone to Naturopathic physicians for most of my life and have benefited in many ways from the excellent diagnostic, preventative, and curative methods practiced by these physicians. I believe their profession offers the well-rounded personalized health support that has allowed me to stay healthy into my 60's.

Furthermore, I have had to maintain an alternative MD as my primary care provider in the case that I need an emergency hospital procedure for which my ND is unable to refer. This has become a cumbersome mandate, especially in sharing medical records between each and instructing hospital records departments where to send them, etc. For me, the MD is the alternative, not the other way around.

Alaskans should have access to the practitioner of their choice and Naturopathic Doctors' scope of practice should be allowed to be fully utilized per their training. Why would these practitioners' full licensed scope of practice be curtailed? What patient would understand these limitations? NDs should be allowed to issue vitamins, minerals and non-controlled substance prescription medication and perform minor office procedures as is needed by the patient.

Especially, in this post-covid reality, we need all the primary-care providers we can get!!! Keeping Alaskans healthy can save health care costs, and, especially since our state is so spread out, inviting Naturopaths to practice in remote towns and villages can help do that. Removing the current limitations can encourage new Naturopathic doctors to come to Alaska rather than deter them.

I am passionate about this! It's about time NDs are allowed to fully do what they do best.

Thank you in advance for your sponsoring SB44, and for taking one step toward modernized health care in our great state. Feel free to share my letter with committee members and consider this my testimony in support.

Sincerely,
Joanie Waller
323 Third St, Juneau AK 99801