



18 February, 2023

Senator Cathy Giessel
State Capitol Room 427
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support for Senate Bill 44

Dear Senator Giessel,

Thank you for supporting, and sponsoring, Senate Bill 44, which updates the scope of practice for licensed Naturopathic Doctors to reflect their level of training and competency. As such, it allows for prescriptive management and minor office procedures.

As you know, our state is in a medical crisis with a scarcity of medical providers, inadequate to meet the needs of our communities. There are about 50 licensed Naturopathic Doctors in this state whom are qualified, trained, and ready to support Alaskans with their healthcare needs. Senate Bill 44 will help address these needs.

In the current model of care, Naturopathic Doctors must refer patients to other, similarly trained, medical providers for prescriptive needs and minor office procedures. It causes a great deal of frustration to our patients, and causes them to incur additional medical costs. Due to the limited availability of other providers, our patients must wait long periods before they can even be seen for these needs. It is an unnecessary burden to our healthcare infrastructure.

Naturopathic Doctors receive training in clinical pharmacology, commensurate with our NP colleagues whom have much less restrictive scope of practice in our state. We receive more training than PA's whom have much broader scope of practice in our state, with minimal oversight. Currently, I need to refer patients to my PA colleague to write prescriptions for my patients. Ironically, when I practiced medicine in Arizona, I was the physician overseeing the PA's in my office.

In many states, Naturopathic Doctors have prescriptive rights to include scheduled medications. In fact, I practiced in Arizona for many years, and had a DEA number and prescriptive authority, including schedule II (limited) through IV drugs; and was able to perform sutures, IUD removals, administer vaccines, etc. These are necessary tools for primary care providers. We are well- trained to utilize these tools, and our Alaskan patients need us to have the ability to prescribe medications and perform minor office procedures. It will help cushion the overwhelming healthcare burden; and it will prevent our patients from requiring duplicative office appointments to meet their healthcare needs.

It simply makes sense. We are trained, we are capable. There is a need. We can meet that need. It is in the best interest of Alaskans.

Sincerely,

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