

From: [Shawn Vainio](#)
To: [Sen. David Wilson](#)
Subject: Re: Alaska Academy of Family Physicians
Date: Wednesday, February 22, 2023 7:47:13 AM

Senator Wilson

I hope this legislative session is going well for you.

I understand the Naturopathic Bill (SB 44) will be going to committee tomorrow. I apologize for the late email, but I have been working nights out in Bethel since I returned from our Advocacy Day with The Alaska Academy of Family Physicians on February 7th.

Here are the facts surrounding this matter:

- 1) There are a limited number of naturopaths in Alaska seeking to expand scope of practice to prescribe Western medications, perform procedures and order labs and imaging.
- 2) The population of Alaska sits at approximately 730,000.
- 3) Some Alaskan citizens will preferentially seek naturopathic medical care.
- 4) It is the duty of government to protect the people.
- 5) I work with traditional Tibetan healers in the Himalayas and have done so for 20+ years.
- 6) I work with non-physician prescribers every work day in Bethel, AK.
- 7) I lobbied Senator Stevens and then Representative Austerman back in the late 2000s early 2010s to require direct entry midwives to be certified by the state and therefore overseen by the state with statute and regulations governing their scope of practice, rather than the prior legislation allowing direct entry midwives to practice without certification or supervision. I did this not to restrict the practice of midwifery, but to protect the public.
- 8) I worked on a naturopath working group from May 2021 to November 2021, and dedicated dozens of hours to meeting with Joe Hayes (from Senator Kawasaki's office), Naturopaths Scott Luper and Abby Laing, the Alaska State Medical Association and the Alaska Academy of Family Physicians (of which I am a Board member, currently serving as Past President).
- 9) The educational and practical comparison of naturopaths to nurse practitioners and physician assistants are not equivalent. The cited numbers by the American Academy of Naturopathic Physicians do not take into account that:
 - a) Nurse practitioners have a nursing degree and nursing experience including additional pharmacology coursework and practical use prior to nurse practitioner

school.

b) Physician assistants practice under a collaborative agreement.

10) My proposal to the working group for last year's legislative session was that a naturopath seeking expanded scope of practice work under a collaborative agreement for their expanded scope of practice.

I believe that my suggested plan is the safest plan moving forward. It is a safe way to assure oversight not just by the State (which will undoubtedly have little to no actual oversight of the practice of medicine) but by colleagues working directly with those who seek to expand their scope.

For the safety of the state, please recognize that one does not accommodate the few to risk the many.

In reference to the proposed bill:

Section 2 creates a bill that allows a board of 3 naturopaths and 2 public members to then control the practice of naturopathy in the state, whereupon the board can then further expand scope.

Section 3 does not allow a naturopath to practice in the state unless they seek prescribing authority. (contradicted in Sec.08.45.045 (2) (D)). The overwhelming majority of naturopaths are not seeking expanded scope of practice, per the discussions of our 2021 working group. At that time 3 of the approximate 50 naturopaths in the state were seeking expanded scope of practice.

Sincerely,

Shawn Vainio MD FAAFP

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On Sat, Feb 18, 2023 at 5:24 AM Shawn Vainio <shawnvainio@gmail.com> wrote:

Senator Wilson

Thank you for taking the time to meet with our representatives of the Alaska Academy of Family Physicians while we were in Juneau on February 7th for our Annual Advocacy Day.

It was unfortunate that we couldn't spend more time discussing the healthcare issues of the state, but I understand it was an especially busy day with Senator Sullivan in town.

I hope this meeting fortified our relationship, and that you understand that our organization (and the Family Physician members that we represent) is committed to the health of the people and communities of Alaska. Please feel free to contact us regarding any healthcare related issues.

(I have personally invested dozens of hours in the naturopathic working group back in 2021 with Senator Kawasaki's office, Joe Hayes, Scott Luper, ASMA, among others, and would be happy to speak to you about the progress we made back in 2021.)

Be well

Sincerely,

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