



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,

Dr. Natalie J. Wiggins
2927 Dartmouth Drive
Anchorage, AK 99508

T 907.929.2222
F 907.929.2225

2925 Debarr Rd. Suite 150
Anchorage, AK 99508

WWW.VITAEHEAL.COM

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



Feb 11, 2023

To Whom It May Concern:

I have lived in Alaska since 1996 and graduated from University of Alaska Anchorage nursing school in 2001. I completed my Nurse practitioner education in 2007. I have provided care for Alaskans for the past 22 years. Over those years my children have received care from naturopathic doctors and I worked in a clinic with naturopathic doctors for the past 16 yrs. I have thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from their care and expertise in all aspects of health.

My patients have always done well and I refer to them in areas of medicine that they have expertise in, as well as general primary care. We have always collaborated and they work well with their medical colleagues. They consult and communicate and get results. Our family of five has needed our share of medicine over the past 20 yrs (cancer, births, surgeries, etc.) The care we receive from naturopathic doctors is fantastic. Their care addresses needs that I am unable to receive from other specialists. I can emphatically say that I am in good health today as a middle aged woman due to their practice of evidence-based medicine.

Naturopathic doctors have medical training and have full scope of practice in other states. In Alaska, we have a shortage of healthcare providers. Nurse practitioners have had independent scope of practice successfully to help meet that need since 1970's. The demand for healthcare is high and more people want preventative and holistic medicine. I implore you to allow naturopathic doctors their full scope of practice (to include prescriptive privilege and minor office procedures) to help meet this need.

Sincerely,

Christine Sagan, APRN, FNP-C
Owner Vitae Integrative Medical Center
Cell: 907-441-5568

YOUR NAME

PO Box 504 Delta Junction, AK 99737 | 907-803-3408 | ericanddiane@hotmail.com

February 22, 2023

Dear Senator Giessel,

I am writing in regard to Senate Bill 44. I am in support of this bill allowing Naturopathic Doctors to write prescriptions. It is my belief that by limiting Naturopathic Doctors you are doing a disservice to them, their training, and their patients. By passing this bill it is my belief that Naturopathic Doctors will be better able to serve their patients.

Sincerely,

Diane Ruse

Dr. Mariah Mosley, NMD



February 19th, 2023

To: Senator Cathy Giessel

RE: Support of SB 44

My name is Dr. Mariah Mosley, and I am writing to urge you for support of Senate Bill 44 (SB 44). This bill will update the current scope of practice for licensed naturopathic doctors in Alaska, which will be extremely beneficial to both Alaskans and our overwhelmed healthcare system. This bill supports a more accurate representative of the education of naturopathic doctors, and allows them to practice how they were trained.

Before my family moved to Alaska, I practiced in southern Arizona- in a small family medicine practice where we saw multiple generations of families. From children presenting with acute otitis media (ear infections) and needing to have an antibiotic prescribed, to the young woman requesting oral contraceptives (birth control) to avoid pregnancy before her and her partner are ready, to the farmer who cut his hand while working and needs a few stitches, to the middle aged woman who had her thyroid removed and needs to be prescribed and take thyroid hormone for the rest of her life, I was able to practice good, safe medicine and prescribe when needed, the necessary pharmaceuticals. Here in Alaska, those same patients would have to go to me, and then afterwards make an appointment to go to another facility to obtain the prescription or minor office procedure. This is more time consuming for both the patient and for Alaska's healthcare system, which already has a doctor shortage.

The changes proposed in SB 44 will support Alaska's healthcare system by allowing naturopathic doctors to practice how they were trained, and give the public more options and greater access to affordable care. It will also encourage more providers to move to Alaska with expansion of the scope of practice, and that will relieve even more of the strain on our current healthcare system.

Thank you in advance for your support of SB 44, and for taking the step towards even better healthcare in our beautiful, well-loved state.

Respectfully,

Dr. Mariah Mosley

Dr. Mariah Mosley, NMD
Anchorage, AK
P: (480) 383-5505
F: (888) 412-1487

Patricia Mongold
3100 Kiska Drive
Fairbanks AK 99709
(907) 474-0076

The Honorable
Senator Cathy Giessel
Senate President
Senator.Cathy.Giessel@akleg.gov

Re: Support for SB44
Senate Health and Social Services Committee Hearing February 23rd

Date: February 23, 2023

Dear Senator Giessel:

I am writing to support passage of SB44, enabling my naturopathic Doctor to practice medicine to the full extent of his training. I want to thank you for co-sponsoring this bill.

For many years I had several medical issues that I was seeking care for from my family physician. After numerous visits and tests over a period of several years I was still unable to get relief. Three years ago, I finally sought care with a naturopathic doctor. Within a few weeks he had determined the main source of my discomfort and within two months my symptoms disappeared. Unlike my previous doctor my new doctor didn't have a timer set for the length of my appointment and took great care in trying to find the right treatments for me.

No matter how happy I am with my new doctor I still have one issue and that is his inability to write prescriptions. I have three medicines I take daily, and I am forced to now have two doctors in order to get the necessary refills. In my opinion this leads to disjointed medical care and could cause conflicts between doctors.

My naturopathic doctor has the necessary training to write prescriptions and if we were located in many states other than Alaska he would have the ability to prescribe as necessary. It seems a disservice to Alaskans that naturopathic doctors are unable to fulfill this need in our state.

Please inform Senator David Wilson, Chairman, and members of his Health and Social Services Committee, of my support for SB 44. Please provide a copy of this letter to the committee for the hearing tentatively scheduled on February 23rd, 2023. And please encourage members of the committee to vote the bill out with a "Do-Pass" recommendation.

Thank you for your service in Juneau and I appreciate you taking the time to read my letter and consider my request.

Sincerely,



Patricia Mongold

February 21, 2023

Dear Senator Cathy Giessel,

I am writing in support of SB 44. Our naturopath has been our Primary Care Physician for over 20 years. We are highly confident with this model and standard of care. We truly appreciate and trust the wealth of information and therapeutic approaches our doctor provides. It enables us to be more proactive in our treatment and offers natural therapies and alternatives to more invasive models of care.

Occasionally however, additional interventions such as prescription drugs or in office procedures are necessary. This creates additional expense as we now must schedule with another physician who is not our primary care doctor and doesn't know us or our full medical history.

This bill is long overdue here in the State of Alaska, thank you for your time!

Lisa Martsof
PO Box 84061
Fairbanks, Alaska 99708



WHITE SPRUCE MEDICAL

1275 Sadler Way STE 104
Fairbanks, AK 99701
Phone (907) 452-3600
Fax (907) 452-3695

February 20, 2023

Dear Senator Giessel,

I support Senate Bill 44 and urge its passage.

Alaska is experiencing a severe shortage of doctors. New patients often wait months to be seen. Primary care is in short supply. Naturopathic doctors (NDs) can help fill that shortage.

As you know, Naturopathic Doctors are trained to provide primary care. They practice as primary care providers in every state on the West Coast except Alaska where they are not allowed to prescribe medications or to do minor office procedures. As a result, many are choosing to leave the state and practice elsewhere. The number of licensed NDs has fallen by 50% in the last 10 years. Every young doctor I have worked with in the last decade (8 of them) has subsequently left the state. They want to be able to prescribe medications. They want to be able to practice as they were trained.

The State of Alaska has the highest health care costs in the United States. The recent pandemic made clear the great need for more medical providers in our state, prompting the State to increase efforts to recruit medical providers from outside. We have 50 doctors in place in Alaskan communities ready to provide primary care. We don't have to recruit them. We don't have to pay a moving bonus. All we have to do is to pass SB 44 to allow them to practice as they were educated and trained.

The Alaska State Medical Association (ASMA) has historically opposed the expansion of the practice of Naturopathic Doctors in Alaska. They continue to claim allowing Naturopathic Doctors to prescribe medications and perform minor office procedures is a menace to public health. The reality is the safety record of Naturopathic medicine is better than the medical profession at large. Nationwide, complaints against NDs with prescription rights is approximately 20% of that for their MD colleagues. Nationwide malpractice rates for NDs with prescription rights is approximately 20% of that for MD's. Insurance companies are in the business of rating the true risk of malpractice. Naturopathic medicine has been rated as safer than medical care provided by MD's.

The American Medical Association has opposed the expansion of prescription rights across the country and across professions. As you remember, in 2017 ASMA opposed HB 103 to allow Optometrists to practice up to their level of education. They habitually oppose the expansion of medical care irrespective of the true effect on the public good. This desperate effort to limit the number of healthcare providers in our state is short sighted and a true threat to public health. Preventing the addition of Alaska's 50 Naturopathic Doctors to the ranks of primary care providers in our state is unconscionable. Not allowing them to practice to the highest level of their education and training serves to disincentivize the future recruitment of Naturopathic Doctors to Alaska.

Thank you for your support in improving the health of Alaska. Thank you for your support in passing SB 44.

Sincerely,

Scott Luper, N.D.

drluperwsm@gmail.com

Cell phone (907) 388-9829



Natural Health CENTER_{LLC}

COMPASSIONATE CARE CHANGING LIVES

February 18, 2023

Dear Senator Giessel:

I am writing to express my deep appreciation to you for sponsoring Senate Bill 44. SB 44 would allow naturopathic doctors to practice to the full extent of our training and provide patients with access to safe and effective medicine. Alaska is facing a shortage in primary care providers and we are well prepared to fill that role. Additionally, our focus on disease prevention has been proven to cut healthcare costs dramatically.

My background:

After graduating with a bachelor of science degree from the University of British Columbia, I attended Bastyr University in Seattle where I earned my naturopathic degree. My clinical rotations included the main Bastyr clinic in Wallingford, the 45th Street Clinic for homeless youth and the Redmond Community Clinic. While attending Bastyr I was taught minor surgery by Thomas Drost, MD, ND, FACS, a surgeon who had decided to further his allopathic medical training by also obtaining a degree in naturopathic medicine.

I am currently co-owner of the Natural Health Center in Anchorage where I have worked since 2001. I primarily serve patients from the Anchorage area and have also provided care for patients in Kodiak in addition to rural areas of Alaska. I have patients who travel to see me from as far north as Utqiagvik and as far south as Ketchikan and everywhere in between. While the majority of the time I am able to care for my patients effectively with non-prescription therapies, there are situations that arise that require additional treatment, such as antibiotics for a urinary tract infection, an epi-pen for allergies, or contraceptive options for a patient who has come in for her annual exam. Being able to write prescriptions for patients would reduce the need for additional medical visits, reduce medical costs, increase efficiency and allow for continuity of care. Over the 21 years I have been practicing medicine in Anchorage, I have often been faced with referring a patient elsewhere, when I could have readily provided the necessary treatment if our scope were broader.

The current restricted scope of practice for naturopathic doctors is a deterrent to providers considering establishing a practice in Alaska. Imagine having the education and training to perform primary care duties and then upon arriving in Alaska part of your valuable toolbox is stripped and left behind.

Expanding our scope of practice to reflect our education and training will only benefit Alaskans and allow better access to comprehensive health care. Thank you for helping naturopathic doctors to provide quality healthcare to our Alaskan patients. Thank you for introducing Senate Bill 44 and for your ongoing support. I urge the Senate to pass SB 44.

Sincerely,

Birgit Lenger, ND

3330 Eagle Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99503 • PH (907) 561-2330 • FX (907) 561-1282
nhc@gci.net • www.nhcak.com

TO: Senator Cathy Geissel
Re. SB 44

I am writing to urge you to support Senate Bill 44 (SB 44). This bill 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. **This will improve healthcare access and help drive down costs.** In addition:

- **Alaska faces a dire shortage of primary-care providers.** The US Department of Labor recognizes naturopathic doctors as primary-care physicians
- Allowing naturopathic doctors to practice the full scope of their training will immediately increase the number of primary-care providers in Alaska. **This will improve healthcare access and help drive down costs.**
- **The recommended changes reflect the actual training and qualifications of naturopathic doctors**, who graduate from accredited 4-year medical programs with more than 4,000 hours of training and clinical rotations. This training is on par with that of medical doctors, osteopathic doctors and nurse practitioners, including 1200 hours of direct patient contact.
- In Alaska, **naturopathic doctors have a more limited scope of practice than healthcare providers in Alaska with equal or lesser training.** Naturopathic doctors practice safely under the complete scope in many other states — as I have done in Oregon since 2010.
- Allowing naturopathic doctors practice to the full scope of their training **lets patients access their medications from their primary care provider without the need for duplicative appointments and costs.**
- **Alaskans face some of the highest health care costs in the nation, increasing prevalence of chronic and preventable disease, and inadequate access to health care — particularly in rural areas.** Passing SB 44 is one step towards addressing these needs.
- Naturopathic doctors' primary focus is on disease prevention, rather than symptom and medication management. This type of care **saves money for consumers,**

insurers and the state. It also decreases the unnecessary ER visits, frequent med checks and follow-up visits.

- Regulating naturopathic doctors appropriately will **encourage more practitioners to move to Alaska** and serve Alaskans. Naturopathic doctors already 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.

I have been receiving care from a naturopathic doctor since moving to Juneau in 2003 and my experience has been outstanding! My Naturopath, Dr. Emily Kane, provides me with lifestyle information and resources to help me stay healthy and avoid more expensive care.

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

Sincerely,

Linda E. Kruger
PO Box 35012
Juneau AK 99803

cc. Senator Jesse Kiehl



Alaska Veterinary Pathology Services

Kathy Burek Huntington, DVM, MS, Diplomate ACVP
23834 The Clearing Drive / Eagle River, AK 99577
Work: (907) 242-2566 / Fax: (907) 696-3565
Avps.kbh@gmail.com

February 20, 2023

Senator Cathy Giessel through jane.conway@akleg.gov

RE: Senate Bill 44

Dear Senator Cathy Giessel

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 44 which will allow licensed Naturopathic Doctors to practice medicine as they were trained to do, including the ability to prescribe medications, and perform minor office procedures including sutures, skin lesion removals, etc. Their training has more than qualified them to do this tasks. My naturopathic doctor, Dr. Wiggins and other providers at Vitae Integrative services have helped me with some of my health much more that "traditional" MDs. They treat the whole person vs one part of their physiology and health, reducing the need to see multiple doctors, which often don't talk to each other. I am surprised and frustrated with their restrictions in Alaska. 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 be easily be avoided by allowing Naturopathic doctors to practice to the extent of their training and skill through the passage of Senate Bill 44. Dr. Wiggins was previously licensed in Arizona, and performed many office procedures and was able to prescribe medication, all of which she isn't allowed to in AK. 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 in trained, and knowledgeable, and able to provide needed care. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,

Kathy Burek Huntington
DVM, MS, diplomate ACVP

February 20, 2023

To: Senator Cathy Geissel

Re: SB 44

My name is Mary DeSmet and I am urging you to support Senate Bill 44 (SB 44) which updates the scope of practice for Naturopathic doctors - helping to reflect their education and training. This would also benefit people seeking good health care AND would help drive down costs on many levels. It would likely attract more providers considering a move to our state.

The changes proposed in this bill reflect a scope of practice that is currently safely and effectively offered by naturopathic doctors in many other states around the country. Given our unique healthcare challenges in Alaska, we should be leading the way in pursuing policies which provide consumers with MORE options and greater access to affordable care.

I have lived in Juneau, AK, since 1973 and have received excellent care from naturopathic physicians for many years: Dr. Scott Jamison, Dr. Glenna Wilde, Dr. Patrick Neary and currently, Dr. Emily Kane. Legislators should be drafting laws that support their continued practice, not limited in scope, laws that fully reflect their training.

Thank you in advance for your support of SB 44 and for taking a step toward better healthcare for the residents of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Mary L DeSmet

8760 Dudley Street

Juneau, AK 99801

(707) 292-4494

fullcircle@ak.net

Bruce W. Campbell
PO Box 82245
Fairbanks, AK 99708
(1883 Kendall Ave, North Pole, AK 99705)
907-322-9221

The Honorable
Senator Robert Myers
Senator.Robert.Myers@akleg.gov

Re: Support for SB44
Senate Health and Social Services Committee Hearing February 23rd

Date: February 14, 2023

Dear Senator Myers:

I am writing to support passage of SB44, enabling my naturopathic Doctor to practice medicine to the full extent of his training. I want to thank you for co-sponsoring this bill.

I was shocked to discover that my naturopathic doctor (ND) could not provide vaccines, even though existing Alaska statutes appear to include the ability to administer injections. But a vaccine is a prescription item, and neither naturopathic, nor for that matter dentists, were able to step in and provide vaccinations in the Fairbanks North Star Borough Covid vaccine clinic. Fortunately, we were able to find enough EMT's, RN's, and others willing to assist. Adding naturopaths will simply increase the number of willing volunteers for the next global pandemic.

I find I am provided a longer and more in-depth appointment with my naturopathic doctor, closer to the family doctor visit of long ago. The shorter 15 to 20 minute appointment with an MD may be sufficient for a quick decision and script for a pill, but frankly, seems too brief to discuss underlying symptoms and conditions.

The MD's focus on prescribing drugs to treat symptoms led me to an alternative approach to a health care. I greatly appreciate the in-depth technical discussions I have with my ND. The relationship of diet, hormones, lifestyle and how to affect desirable changes in all. Yes, discussions can include medications, for which, under current regulatory authority, I need to add several weeks in order to schedule an additional appointment with an MD. Lifestyle issues may seem obvious to an MD, but are difficult to unravel, and in my case, take time.

Please inform Senator David Wilson, Chairman, and members of his Health and Social Services Committee, of my support for SB 44. Please provide a copy of this letter to the committee for the hearing tentatively scheduled on February 23rd, 2023. And please encourage members of the committee to vote the bill out with a "Do-Pass" recommendation.

It is a gorgeous February in Fairbanks. The days are getting longer, and sunshine ripples off the crisp snow. Our roads are in much better shape than last year. Thank you for your service in Juneau.

Sincerely,
Bruce W. Campbell

Haley Brown
1212 Denali Way
Fairbanks AK 99701

To Senator Cathy Giesel,

I am in full support of senate bill 44 which focuses on broadening the scope of practice for naturopathic doctors in regards to prescription rights within the state of Alaska. If this bill were to pass this would open up an incredible amount of doors for practitioners as well as patients. Currently, naturopathic doctors are practicing at a deficit compared to medical doctors due to the inability of access to full scope of practice, that is prescription rights.

For example, I myself don't have health insurance provided by my job, White Spruce Medical Clinic is a naturopathic clinic in Fairbanks that offers cheaper pricing than most for primary care provider visits, and being that Dr.Scott Luper is a trusted individual that I'd share my health care information with I'd like to see him as a patient. My only needs are to acquire birth control and to have regular checkups on my current antidepressant medications. Unfortunately due to the restrictions to his scope of practice I'm unable to see the provider I trust as often as I'd like with an appointment price that fits my budgeting as well as my treatment needs.

The appointments and experiences I have had in this state have been absolutely wonderful. I've felt heard and thoroughly taken care of. I feel they are competent in my medical needs and issues. I feel that because they put the natural approach first that the state wouldn't have the issue of worrying about irresponsible prescribing habits like we currently face with MD's. From first hand experience I've seen that naturopathic doctors have more than enough education and experience in the medical realm that there is no clear reason why they shouldn't be able to prescribe.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Haley Brown

**Robert F. Bechtold
Major, Army, Retired
19819 Samalga Circle
Eagle River, AK 99577**

To: Senator Cathy Giessel

Re: Support for Senate Bill 44

My name is Robert Bechtold 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.

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.

I have been receiving care from a naturopathic doctor for two years, and my experience has been outstanding. The Veteran Administration is even providing some financial support and I have been able to receive treatments that have allowed me to significantly improve my physical well-being, especially with my great amount of joint inflammation and limited range of motion due to excessive injuries during 21 years of military service.

Non-traditional medicine, procedures and care have been around many years longer than our traditional care as provided in most American health care systems.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert F. Bechtold", written in a cursive style.

**Robert F. Bechtold
Major, Army, Retired**

February 21, 2023

To: Senator Cathy Giessel

I am writing to request that you lend your support to updating licensing laws for naturopathic medicine in Alaska, specifically SB 44.

These are among the reasons SB 44 needs to be enacted:

Because naturopaths are not permitted to write prescriptions in Alaska, I have had to make another appointment with my primary medical doctor to fill my prescriptions, thus incurring unnecessary costs for me and my insurance company.

My naturopathic doctor works with me to keep my need for prescription medicines to a minimum while addressing the underlying issues that caused my condition in the first place. As a person with an autoimmune disorder, I found a lot of success in managing my condition without costly medications.

Additionally, my naturopathic doctor can often see me before my primary care provider and spends quality time with me addressing needs.

Naturopathic doctors are a valuable resource:

Most naturopathic medical schools are located in states that have included prescription writing authority since the late 1980's or early 1990's and these therapies have been part of naturopathic medical education since that time.

Naturopathic doctors are ready, willing and able to address the doctor shortage in Alaska.

Naturopaths have had an impressive record of safety in Alaska as well as in states where ND's have more expansive scopes of practice such as Arizona, Oregon and Washington State.

This is a consumer rights issue. Naturopathic doctors have been licensed in Alaska since 1986 and would be my first choice of family doctor, if they were able to fully support my needs with prescription coverage.

Thank you in advance for your support of SB 44.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scharla K. Baker". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with the first name being the most prominent part.

Scharla K. Baker

03-02-23

To: Senator Cathy Giessel
Re: Support for Senate Bill 44

My name is Cynthea L. Ainsworth 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.

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.

I have been receiving care from a naturopathic doctor and my experience has been both very positive. I rely on naturopathic medicine.

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

Sincerely,

Cynthea L. Ainsworth, Ph.D.



Dr. Orna Izakson ND, RH(AHG)
2102 Cleveland Ave., Anchorage AK 99517
907.202.9917 v • 503.575.9229 f
AltaNaturalMedicine.com

February 21, 2023

Dear Senator Giessel —

Thank you so much for sponsoring Senate Bill 44, supporting the complete practice of naturopathic medicine in Alaska.

My name is Dr. Orna Izakson, and I am a licensed naturopathic doctor in Alaska and Oregon with a focus on mental health, women's health and chronic disease.

As you well know, Alaska faces a significant shortage of healthcare providers. Naturopathic doctors have the training, safety record and calling to step into our full scope of practice. Passing SB 44 would help all Alaskans.

For the past 13 years I have practiced in Oregon, a state with a full scope of practice commensurate to my education and that of my Alaska colleagues. Both Oregon and the DEA permit me to prescribe pharmaceuticals, including controlled substances, with few limitations.

My patients primarily improve their health with nutritional supplements, herbs, diet and lifestyle changes. I have rarely needed to use pharmaceutical interventions, but having the option to prescribe is important for keeping my patients well.

In my Oregon practice, some patients present with prescriptions already on board — sometimes a great many of them. As we work together, most patients find that full doses of their medications is no longer necessary. Being able to adjust their medications, nearly always downward, improves their health, saves money and protects their safety. For example, I help many patients normalize their blood pressure and blood sugar levels. Leaving them on higher doses of antihypertensives and antidiabetics until they can get an appointment with a prescriber is unnecessary and unsafe.

One of my earliest Oregon patients was a young mother, hoping to get pregnant, who presented with seizure-like symptoms. Her neurological work up was inconclusive, and she declined the drugs offered by her neurologist. After working with diet, lifestyle, herbs and nutritional support, she settled into a pattern consistent with catamenial epilepsy. With that insight, she again approached specialists to for hormonal support. She again declined the antiseizure drugs her neurologist offered, and spent several miserable months trialing different birth control pills that caused significant side effects without improving her symptoms. Finally, after hormone testing that her specialists would not order, we had clear evidence that her progesterone levels were low. Her symptoms entirely resolved with over-the-counter progesterone cream. For the first time in years she was safe to drive a car, and went on to become a healthcare provider.

Her life turned around with the use of an over-the-counter product that Alaska naturopathic doctors are not allowed to recommend. My patient would have continued utilizing scarce specialist appointments while suffering her symptoms and the side effects from unnecessary medications.

I have on rare occasions needed to prescribe antibiotics for acute infections, antivirals for herpes outbreaks and rescue inhalers for asthma. During the pandemic, Oregon's scope of practice allowed me and my colleagues to volunteer in the mass vaccination effort, and now allows us to prescribe paxlovid for patients in acute need. Being able to offer this is just good medicine.

Although it is within my Oregon scope of practice, I personally do not perform minor office procedures or offer IV-nutrient therapy, but have referred my patients to colleagues for these procedures. I have provided nutrient injections and my patients love them.

Naturopathic doctors in Alaska do not want to be medical doctors or to replace medical doctors. We do want to collaborate with our peers to help our patients by offering the full suite of tools we are trained to use — and which we use conservatively, effectively and with a stellar safety record in states where we are given the scope to do so. Senate Bill 44 would allow naturopathic doctors to step fully into our appropriate role in the Alaska healthcare ecosystem, improving access and reducing costs for all Alaskans.

Thank you for your sponsorship and support of this bill.

Sincerely,



ALTA
NATURAL MEDICINE

Dr. Orna Izakson ND, RH(AHG)
2102 Cleveland Ave., Anchorage AK 99517
907.202.9917 v • 503.575.9229 f
AltaNaturalMedicine.com

Orna Izakson ND, RH(AHG)
Vice President, Alaska Association of Naturopathic Doctors



**Center for
Natural Medicine, Inc.**

March 3, 2023

Senator Cathy Giessel
Senate President
State Capitol Room 427
Juneau AK, 99801

Re: Senate Bill 44 "An Act relating to the practice of naturopathy; . . ."

Dear Senator Giessel,

I am writing to thank you for sponsoring SB44 that addresses the scope and practice of naturopathic medicine in the State of Alaska.

I am in support of this bill.

As a naturopathic doctor and licensed acupuncturist in practice for 31 years – 28 of those in Eagle River, Alaska, I have experienced firsthand the frustrations that occur in daily practice from a severely limited scope of practice.

It is true that the way naturopathic doctors have been treated in this state is reprehensible. In Alaska, naturopathic doctors have a more limited scope of practice than other health care providers in Alaska with equal or lesser training. Naturopathic doctors practice safely under a complete scope in many other states. It is ultimately the Alaskan patients that we serve who suffer from the limited scope of our practice.

As you are aware, naturopathic doctors are well trained. The US Department of Labor recognizes naturopathic doctors as primary care physicians. Just as medical or osteopathic doctors are considered to be the experts in their fields, so are naturopathic doctors' experts in the practice of natural medicine. Naturopathic doctors have practiced in the great state of Alaska for 37 years. We have an impeccable safety record. We provide excellent patient care.

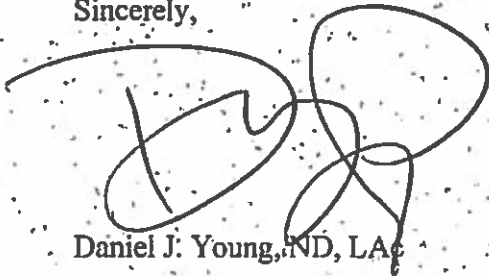
Over the last few years, we have seen COVID take its toll on our medical infrastructure. There is a shortage of health care workers across the board – nurses, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and primary care providers are all in demand. Allowing naturopathic doctors to practice the full scope of their training will immediately increase the number of primary care providers in Alaska. That in turn, will improve healthcare access and help drive down cost. Further, naturopathic doctors' focus on disease prevention, rather than symptom and medication management will save money for consumers, insurers, and the state. It also decreases the utilization of unnecessary ER visits, frequent med checks, and follow-up visits.

Alaskans suffer from some of the highest health care costs in the nation, increasing prevalence of chronic and preventable disease, and inadequate access to health care—particularly in rural areas. Access to naturopathic medicine could help this.

The recommended changes found in SB44 reflect the actual training and qualifications of naturopathic doctors, who graduate from federally accredited 4-year naturopathic medical programs with more than 4,000 hours of training and clinical rotation.

Once again, I thank you for sponsoring this bill and sincerely hope that it will pass out of the Senate, make it through the House and to the floor for a vote.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Young', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end.

Daniel J. Young, ND, LAc

"vis medicatrix naturae"

Daniel J. Young, ND, LAc. – Naturopathic Doctor & Licensed Acupuncturist
Phone (907)694-5522 | Fax (907)694-5524 | 16844 Easy Street | Eagle River, AK 99577
www.eaglerivernaturalmedicine.com



Natural Health C E N T E R

3330 Eagle Street, Anchorage, AK 99503

T: (907) 561-2330

F: (907) 561-1282

nhc@gci.net

Dear Senator Cathy Giessel,

I am writing in support of updating licensing laws for naturopathic medicine in Alaska, specifically SB 44. I have been practicing naturopathic medicine in Anchorage since 2012. I arrived knowing that the scope of naturopathic practice in Alaska was far more limited than what my training in Washington prepared me for as a primary care provider. The limited scope in practice did not deter my decision to move my family to Alaska because I enjoy preventative and lifestyle medicine. A large part of my practice is educating patients on their health conditions and how they are modifiable with changes to diet, lifestyle, exercise, and stress management. My main objective is to keep patients well so that their problem lists stay small and their needs for long term medications and surgeries stay minimal. In the long term, this saves patients, and their insurance company, money and time to do the things they enjoy longer.

The reason that SB 44 needs to be enacted is that I cannot provide my patients with all of their treatment options, most importantly the standard of care treatments. My patients potentially will need two separate encounters with two separate providers whenever I assess a condition that needs a higher level of care. The doubles both patients and insurance cost of care. For one example, if a patient has a group A strep infection in their throat, they need to be referred out for antibiotics, which would require another office visit and duplicate testing. Another example is that recently I had a patient in office for routine well care. Their exam was normal besides a blood pressure reading indicating hypertensive urgency (systole over 180). They needed to start anti-hypertensive medication that day, which I could not prescribe. With Alaska's current doctor shortage, they do not have a primary care provider and I referred them to urgent care.

I would like to provide standard of care medicine to Alaskans in addition to preventative and lifestyle medicine, but cannot due to the current limited scope of practice for naturopathic doctors in this state. My training had prepared me to practice general medicine, including writing prescriptions and minor surgery, excluding oncology and obstetrics. I am ready and willing to step into a role that would help alleviate the doctor shortage here in Alaska.

Thank you in advance for your support of SB 44.

Sincerely,

Marion Clement, ND