

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 30, 2009

1:36 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Bettye Davis, Chair  
Senator Joe Paskvan, Vice Chair  
Senator Johnny Ellis

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Joe Thomas  
Senator Fred Dyson

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE BILL NO. 70

"An Act relating to naturopaths and to the practice of naturopathy; establishing an Alaska Naturopathic Medical Board; authorizing medical assistance program coverage of naturopathic services; and providing for an effective date."

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 70

SHORT TITLE: NATUROPATHS

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) DAVIS

01/21/09	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/09	(S)	HSS, L&C, FIN
03/13/09	(S)	HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
03/13/09	(S)	Heard & Held
03/13/09	(S)	MINUTE(HSS)
03/30/09	(S)	HSS AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

TOM OBERMEYER, aid to Senator Davis  
State Capital  
Juneau, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided an overview of SB 70.

EMILY KANE, ND, Vice President  
Alaska Association of Naturopathic Physicians

Juneau, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported SB 70.

KRISTIN L. COX, ND

Rainforest Naturopathic Medicine

Juneau, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Supported SB 70.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:36:59 PM](#)

**CHAIR BETTYE DAVIS** called the Senate Health and Social Services Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:36 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Paskvan, Ellis and Davis.

#### **SB 70-NATUROPATHS**

[1:37:22 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVIS announced consideration of SB 70.

[1:37:58 PM](#)

TOM OBERMEYER, aid to Senator Davis provided a brief overview of SB 70, "relating to naturopaths and to the practice of naturopathy; establishing an Alaska Naturopathic Medical Board; authorizing medical assistance program coverage of naturopathic services; and providing for an effective date." This bill provides for a new naturopathic board with members designated in the bill; it is independent of the state medical board but does come under the auspices of the state department of licensing. SB 70 expands the practice of naturopathy into minor surgery and prescriptive rights. Details of the changes proposed can be found on page 4 of the bill.

The state medical association opposes the bill. The naturopaths who have testified in favor of it believe that their training is adequate to provide additional care in this state, particularly in the underserved areas, to assist in alleviating the great shortage of primary care physicians.

This issue is not new; this is the second or third legislature that has brought this bill before the committee. Naturopathic practice is licensed in at least 15 states and about 9 of those have some level of prescriptive rights. Every state's licensing is a little different, which has made it difficult to identify any consistency in the training and the practice but it is

clearly a complementary alternative medical practice that is increasing throughout the country

[1:41:28 PM](#)

CHAIR DAVIS asked if the committee has any questions or concerns. She said she will open the floor to public testimony and that it is her desire to move the bill out of committee today.

[1:42:10 PM](#)

EMILY KANE ND, Vice President, Alaska Association of Naturopathic Physicians, Juneau, AK, said that Dr. Lise Alschuler, President, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, was scheduled to testify via teleconference at 2:30 p.m. but if the bill is moving out of committee today, she will hold her testimony for the next committee of referral.

CHAIR DAVIS asked Kristin Cox, ND if she wished to testify and if her testimony would add anything new to what has already been presented.

KRISTIN L. COX ND, Rainforest Naturopathic Medicine, Juneau, AK, said no, that her testimony simply reinforces what has been said before in support of SB 70.

DR. KANE said she would be happy to take questions from the committee.

CHAIR DAVIS asked the will of the committee with regard to this bill.

SENATOR ELLIS commented that he has "lived through this bill" three or four times over the years and he is ready to support a motion to move the bill.

[1:43:52 PM](#)

SENATOR PASKVAN moved to report SB 70 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s). There being no objection, the motion carried.

[1:45:13 PM](#)

SENATOR THOMAS joined the meeting.

CHAIR DAVIS thanked the committee members for being present today and said that she will call Dr. Alschuler to advise her that the bill has been moved to the Labor and Commerce Committee.

1:45:50 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee,  
Senator Davis adjourned the meeting at 1:45 p.m.