



University of Bridgeport

College of Naturopathic Medicine

February 20, 2013

Dear Public Health Committee Members:

I am a naturopathic physician and Dean of the University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine. Please accept this testimony in *support* of the Connecticut Naturopathic Physicians Association and HB 5734.

The University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine is the only such college located within a comprehensive university and the only CNME accredited naturopathic program on the east coast. UBCNM's program alumni have held positions at top medical institutions, such as New York University and Yale, as well as innovative medical centers such as Cancer Treatment Centers of America. In keeping with the multidisciplinary health sciences division at University of Bridgeport, UBCNM facilitates events with local and regional medical schools, such as Yale, University of Connecticut, and Brown University to enhance student and resident education in integrative medicine.

The University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine currently requires 72 hours of didactic training in pharmacology related to the clinical areas of cardiology, gastroenterology, respiratory, infectious diseases, neurology, dermatology, rheumatology, genitourinary, endocrine, and drugs of abuse, among others. Students are taught the major drug classes commonly in use in clinical practice. Topics include routes of administration, pharmacodynamics, mechanisms of action, chief side effects and toxicities, and clinical indications. Specialty courses such as emergency medicine and minor surgery also include pharmacology topics related to suturing and local anesthetics, and wound care and antibiotics. These courses are generally taught by MDs or NDs with specialty training in pharmacology (e.g., registered pharmacists or postgraduate training in pharmacology).

An additional 27 hours of didactic and practical training in the specialty area of intravenous therapeutics is offered as an elective. Student attendance for this elective training is close to 100%.

Students also complete 171 hours of botanical medicine and pharmacognosy, which includes the pharmacodynamic principles of many plant-derived pharmaceutical agents (e.g., anticholinergics and opiates). Pharmacognosy is the study of the physical,

chemical, biochemical and biological properties of drugs, drug substances or potential drugs or drug substances of natural origin.

In the Naturopathic Medical Center, the primary training site for UBCNM, students see patients under the supervision of licensed physicians. Many patients seen at the clinic are presently taking pharmaceuticals and are often on multiple prescriptions. Students prescribe nutrients and botanical medicines to these patients, modifying or moderating natural (e.g., nutritional or botanical) prescriptions according to known drug-herb-nutrient interactions. It is important to note that in prescribing botanical medicines, students follow the same steps that other physicians do when prescribing a pharmaceutical drug. Specifically, they:

1. Evaluate and clearly define the patient's medical problem,
2. Specify the therapeutic objective,
3. Select the botanical medicines indicated for this patient,
4. Initiate therapy with appropriate dosage and length of treatment,
5. Give the patient information about the prescription, instructions on taking the medicine, and warnings of any adverse effects or food/drug interactions, and
6. Establish the timing for follow-up and evaluation of the treatment.

This process is consistent with the recommendations for prescribing medications established by the World Health Organization and adopted by the American Association of Family Physicians.

HB 5734 proposes reasonable changes to the law that serve to modernize the scope of practice in keeping with naturopathic medical education. These changes will allow NDs to better serve our communities, and afford patients access to continuity of care and a full range of services in keeping with the training of their naturopathic physician.

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Pimentel, ND
Dean

For more information:

University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine
<http://www.bridgeport.edu/academics/graduate/naturo>

Comparing ND/MD Curricula. <http://www.aanmc.org/education/comparing-nd-md-curricula.php>

Pollock, M, et al. Appropriate Prescribing of Medications: An Eight-Step Approach. Am Fam Physician 2007;75:231-6, 239-40.