

# Jesse D. McDonald

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RE: Amendment to Bill 5537

**I am writing in support of adding the Naturopathic Scope Expansion language to bill #5537.**

As a Connecticut resident and patient of multiple Naturopathic physicians, I strongly support the expanded scope of Naturopathic Doctors in our state and the addition of the Naturopathic Scope Extension language to bill #5537.

Naturopathic Doctors (NDs) are unique in their approach but equal to their MD counterparts in education and training. NDs complete four years of post-graduate medical training. They are licensed by the state of Connecticut and are covered by most health insurance carriers in the state. NDs can order diagnostic testing and are qualified to act as primary care physicians. In fact, some actuarial data used in determining malpractice insurance rates suggests that NDs have a stronger safety record than Primary Care Medical Doctors (PCPs). Unfortunately, naturopathic doctors in Connecticut are limited by outdated laws. The proposed Scope Expansion is already the law in 17 other states.

Connecticut has one of only five accredited Naturopathic Medical Schools in the country, The University of Bridgeport, College of Naturopathic Medicine (UBCNM) and it is a leader in this field of specialized medicine. It is important to offer graduates of this fine program the incentive to continue practicing in Connecticut by allowing them to use the full scope of their skills.

Expanding the scope of practice for NDs could also help our state control medical costs as patients can use their ND as a primary care physician instead of having to see yet another doctor for services that an ND is qualified by education and training to perform. The consumer and/or health insurer would not have to pay for multiple office visits when only one visit was needed. In addition, because NDs do not typically prescribe medications as a first resort (in states that have expanded their scope of practice), this could help reduce pharmaceutical costs for health insurers in Connecticut. The control of healthcare costs is going to be very important to the success of the state health insurance exchange (Access Health CT). As a licensed health insurance agent for nearly 20 years, I think the scope of practice expansion for NDs can only improve the affordability of health insurance in the long term along with helping to lower healthcare costs in Connecticut.

I have greatly benefited personally as a patient of naturopathic physicians through my many years as a Milford resident. Please support this important legislation, which will allow these highly trained physicians to help Connecticut residents even more comprehensively.

I hope that you will give voice to my support at the hearing!

Sincerely,  
Jesse D. McDonald