



March 12, 2014

From: Michelle A. Hessberger, ND, MS, LAc, Dipl Ac

To: CT State Legislative Members

Re: Inclusion of Language on Naturopathic Medicine Scope of Practice in H.B. No. 5537 (RAISED): AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH'S RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING VARIOUS REVISIONS TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH STATUTES

Dear Legislators,

I thank Co-Chairs Gerrantana and Johnson as well as all Committee members for this opportunity.

My name is Michelle Hessberger and I am a Connecticut licensed naturopathic physician. I live with my family in Milford, CT and work with patients clinically in our Milford and New Haven offices with Dr. Artemis Morris.

While I consider myself a fairly recent graduate of UB, I have practiced full-time starting in January of 2011. During this time, I have helped many patients but have also experienced delays in the care of my patients due to the antiquated ND laws here in CT.

For example, a 56-year-old woman, whom I have successfully treated for high cholesterol and hives, presents with sudden onset of burning urination and increased urinary frequency. Her urinalysis and culture reveals she has a urinary tract infection and is infected with *E. coli*. The sensitivity testing clearly shows several antibiotics that could easily and quickly eradicate the infection, of which Bactrim DS would be best at a dose of 1 daily for 10 days. However, her care is delayed because she cannot get in to see her primary care physician for at least a month and I am not allowed to prescribe here in CT despite being trained in uses and doses of antibiotics.

Another patient, a 51-year-old female, presents with an abscess that has formed around part of an old abdominal surgical scar, and she would like me to drain it for her. It is located right around her waist where her pants continuously rub and chafe the area. While it is a simple incision and drainage that is so small as to not require stitches, I am not allowed to perform this procedure in CT because of the antiquated ND laws. Hence my patient has to suffer for two more weeks of putting on hot compresses to allow it to fully come to the surface on its own because her earliest appointment with her MD is 3 months out.

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I treat patients of all ages and had an 18-year-old female who came into my office this past week for work with diet and lifestyle management. She has a genetic condition called Spinal Muscular Atrophy where she has difficulty walking and requires braces for her legs to help improve her mobility. She is also experiencing curvature of the hands and hyperflexion of several fingers, which is making it difficult for her to write. She could definitely use some wrist and hand braces at night and at rest that would help straighten and stretch out the muscles and tendons that are twisting her fingers, thereby allowing her improved use of her hands. However, I am currently not allowed to prescribe any medical devices here in CT.

In regards to medical devices and pharmacology, I have a 42-year-old obese male patient who is borderline diabetic and is having some clear spikes in blood sugar levels that would warrant testing of blood sugar levels at home and possibly metformin. His next office visit with his PCP is not until 6 months from now and we are awaiting his lab results to determine the next course of action. While we are working with diet and lifestyle to reduce his obesity and insulin resistance, it would be immensely helpful if he could monitor his blood glucose levels at home after meals with a glucometer to determine if his blood sugar levels would warrant prescription interventions. Unfortunately, I am not allowed to write a prescription for a glucometer and test strips or for metformin.

I bring forward these cases as just a small number of examples of how I could help my patients better if I was allowed to practice in CT as naturopathic physicians are allowed to practice in states like Oregon, Arizona, and Vermont. I ask all of you to vote for these changes in the law not just for myself, but specifically to allow my patients better access to the healthcare they deserve.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

With deep respect and my sincere gratitude,



Michelle Hessberger, ND, MS Cellular and Molecular Biology, LAc, Dipl Ac

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