

Testimony of Hannah Gale, student at the University of Bridgeport presented before the Public Health Committee Regarding Inclusion of Prescriptive Authority for Naturopathic Medicine Physicians in H.B. No. 6797 (RAISED): AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF NATUROPATHY.

March 16, 2015

Dear State Legislatures,

As a teacher at the Housatonic Valley Waldorf School in Newtown, CT from 2001-2009, I became increasingly concerned about the state of children's health as I observed the impact of ill health on students' abilities to concentrate and enjoy their learning process. I observed children with many more health issues than I had seen in my own childhood. Some were diagnosed, such as asthma, attention deficit, autism spectrum, etc., and some were sub-clinical, such as children who had been treated for Lyme disease, but who were always tired and whose knees hurt. There were also children who had to put their head down on their desk often, or who were pale and lacked stamina who were not debilitated, but who were less well than they should have been. I found myself increasingly discussing diet and nutrition with my parents during parent-teacher conferences, out of a desire to support my students. But, I had no training in this, so I often suggested that my parents seek advice from a Naturopathic Physician who was a parent at our school. Many parents were proactive and I observed that diet and other Naturopathic modalities made a difference in some of the students' well-being and school performance, but there were some parents who were not interested in my advice or suggestions, because, frankly, I had no training. So, some children continued to eat foods with high sugar, food coloring and wheat content, and I observed how this impacted their health on through adolescence, but was unable to affect any changes that might have helped them.

Eventually, after attending a course on middle-school science education and graduating my class of 2009, I began a series of steps that led me to become a

student at the College of Naturopathic Medicine at the University of Bridgeport. My deep desire is that, having obtained education and training, I will be able to practice Naturopathic Medicine that improves the health and well-being of children and families and supports enjoyment of learning for Connecticut's children. If the scope of practice for Naturopathic Medicine is widened to bring it in line with other states, then I will be able to utilize the full range of my training in the care of my future patients. I can well imagine scenarios where patients will have conditions that require monitoring to ensure that the course of a childhood illness is improving, but may need intervention if they are not. For instance, a patient with childhood asthma: there are many Naturopathic modalities available to improve an asthmatic child's health that will greatly improve their condition, but there may be an emergency event where they do, in fact, need an inhaler. If I had those privileges, I could both gradually work on my patient's health and make sure that they are protected from an emergency event. If I am not able to meet the full needs of my patient, then they are in a position of having to move between different doctors, which is an added burden for them.

There are many other scenarios that I could imagine, but the crux of the matter is that Naturopathic Medicine can greatly benefit children's health, but it is subtle, it slowly builds the nutritional and immune foundations of patients over time. Sometimes, critical events arise that may be setbacks in a larger trajectory towards improving health, and having to force patients to seek alternate care from doctors who may not be familiar with their histories cannot be of service to anyone.

Thank you,

Hannah Gale, LAc, N.D. candidate 2017

Hannah Gale
234 Soundview Ave.
Fairfield, CT 06825
Hgale9@optonline.net
203-335-4399