



Division of Health Sciences

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Testimony of David M. Brady, ND 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

Hello and thank you to Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and Committee members. My name is Dr. David Brady and I am a naturopathic medicine physician licensed in CT and VT. I live and practice in Trumbull, CT and also serve as the Vice Provost for Health Sciences at the University of Bridgeport and have previously served as the Dean of the College of Naturopathic Medicine at the University.

How the Current Law and Scope Affect the University's College of Naturopathic Medicine:

The current licensing law in Connecticut for NDs, with its very limited scope of practice compared to other states, most critically the lack of any prescriptive authority, continues to provide a significant impediment to health care consumers in the state seeking a broad range of naturopathic care and to the University in efficiently meeting our educational and community health care delivery missions. We are charged by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME), the federally-recognized programmatic accreditor for naturopathic medical schools, with educating NDs to meet the comprehensive standards and competencies to prepare them for practice in any state, including those with modern scopes of practice and broad prescriptive authority.

The law also greatly limits the health care services the College can provide to our community members who visit our *UB Clinics* where collectively over 25,000 patients are seen per year, mainly folks from the needy Greater Bridgeport area with chronic disease and health challenges who have no insurance coverage and no other avenue to access such care. This situation also contributes to difficulty in the recruitment of the best students from around the country, as well as



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premier faculty and researchers, to our College of Naturopathic Medicine and reduces the opportunities for our graduates within the State, forcing them to relocate to other states that offer them the ability to practice to the full extent of their training and competencies.

What We Seek:

We seek inclusion of previously submitted language to **HB 6797** regarding specific limited prescriptive authority for naturopathic physicians consistent with our contemporary education, training and competency and the practice of general family-based ambulatory care. During last year's scope enhancement committee process with DPH we submitted substantial amounts of outcome data from the peer-reviewed medical and healthcare policy research, state naturopathic medical boards, offices of professional regulation, malpractice insurance carriers, and third-party health insurers showing that NDs in states with modern scopes of practice which include prescriptive authority deliver care for common ambulatory conditions less expensively, with better patient satisfaction, and with equal or better outcomes, and greater safety. I have submitted an abbreviated version of such information into testimony today for review at your convenience. Included is the 2013 comprehensive report entitled "*Naturopathy in Vermont: Evaluating Education Differences and the Role of Naturopathic Doctors (NDs) as Primary Care Providers*" conducted by the Nelson A. Rockefeller Center Policy Research Shop at Dartmouth College and presented to the Vermont State Government Operations Committee. This report concludes; "*Properly trained naturopaths as primary care providers contribute to reduced healthcare costs in Vermont and personalized care for patients.*"

Naturopathic Medical Education and Training:

A licensed naturopathic physician (ND) attends a four-year naturopathic medical school and is educated in all of the same basic sciences as an MD, but also studies holistic and lifestyle medicine approaches with an emphasis on prevention and upstream intervention using all evidence-based tools available to include the conservative use of prescription medications where appropriate. This includes



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two years of clinical experience with direct patient care responsibility, under the supervision of an experienced licensed provider. A naturopathic physician also takes rigorous professional board exams, known as the NPLEX. The naturopathic medicine curriculum generally exceeds 5,000 hours of doctoral-level training over four years, again with approximately 1,400 of those hours in experiential clinical training with significant direct patient management responsibility.

What the Experience in Other States Has Shown About Safety and Cost Savings:

The reality is that we are not asking for anything new or novel for naturopathic physicians. The experience in other states with prescriptive authority for NDs has shown that the ND uses medication judiciously and perhaps more conservatively than their conventional medical counterparts, and with an impeccable safety record.

Fairness, Equity, and Freedom of Choice:

In the end, what we are asking for is nothing more than the ability to service the patients who seek out our kind of health care without having them inconvenienced by delays and disruptions in care, as well as redundant office visits, which are costly to the patient and the health care system, due to unnecessary referrals for routine problems that could have been safely and immediately dealt with if Connecticut naturopathic physicians had a reasonably more comprehensive and modern scope of practice like our colleagues around the country, including in other New England states such as VT, New Hampshire, and Maine. For example, as a licensed ND in VT I am able to provide the level of care for my patients we are seeking in this bill, while in Connecticut I am not, even though my level of training, experience and competency is the same regardless of which state I may happen to be in. We ask for our patients to be provided with the freedom of choice that they seek in making their health care decisions and for fairness and equity as a profession to be able to practice to the full extent of our contemporary education and training and to participate fully in helping address the significant challenges facing our health care system. With the implementation of the Affordable Care Act and the projected provider shortages and cost



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concerns, naturopathic physicians sincerely hope that we can fully participate as collaborative partners in the solutions to these challenges in Connecticut, as we do in other states.

I sincerely thank you for your time and consideration and I will take any questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'DMB, ND'. The signature is stylized and cursive.

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