

Testimony for Public Hearing  
Public Health Committee  
March 16, 2015

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H.B. No. 6797 – An Act Concerning the Practice of Naturopathy

To the members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Emili Kellner, and I am a mother of three children who have all been under naturopathic care from infancy. H.B. 6797 proposes changes to the status of naturopathic physicians that would personally impact my life and that of my family. I ask you to support H.B. 6797, to expand the scope of naturopathic practice to include the authority to prescribe and dispense pharmaceutical medications.

As a parent, I have always sought to create for my family a team of health practitioners who practice within the model of medicine that we embrace – and naturopathy is at the center of this. My family has received absolutely unparalleled care from the naturopathic physicians we have chosen to oversee our health. I am very fortunate that since we have been under this high quality of care, no one in my family has needed any kind of prescription. However, as much as my goal is to find solutions within the impressively broad knowledge of non-pharmaceutical treatment found through naturopathic doctors, we do not seek to isolate ourselves within any paradigm to the point of detriment. We do not seek to blindly reject any form of conventional medicine, including pharmaceuticals, should we decide with our doctor that they are warranted.

With that in mind, this bill would make possible the practice of truly integrated care, allowing my family to confidently contain our health needs to one primary practitioner. Granting prescription rights to naturopaths would eliminate the need to “outsource” to medical doctors or urgent care centers when a physician and family have come to the decision to call on modern drugs. As a mother, I dread the thought of that scenario: packing a sick, miserable child into the car to be seen by our preferred doctor and finding that the safest option is one requiring a prescription - one that the doctor is well aware of and educated on, but one that they are legally unable to provide. Then would come another car ride, more time away from a warm, familiar bed they should be recuperating in, to a doctor they are likely unfamiliar with, and enduring a repeat of the same examination and discussion to obtain the treatment we had already been recommended. Along with the impact on my family, I would certainly wonder how those resources at a second doctor's office or urgent care center could have been better used to serve other patients seeking initial care. The icing on the cake would of course be a double payment (also meaning a higher cost to insurance companies) for the visit to two physicians. The passing of this bill would eliminate the situation described above by enabling us to receive all necessary treatment at our first stop.

Naturopathic doctors receive the same average number of accredited education hours as their conventional counterparts, they pass national and state-level examinations prior to being licensed in Connecticut - they should be afforded the scope of practice suited to the scope of their rigorous training, enabling them to provide a wider range of options when serving families like my own. It is for these reason that I ask you to support H.B. 6797 and grant prescriptive authority to naturopathic doctors in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this issue that is near and dear to my heart, and for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Emili Kellner