

Public Health Committee Hearing

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

Monday, March 16, 2015

Hartford, CT

Dear Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of H.B. No. 6797. I ask you to include language in the bill that allows NDs prescriptive authority.

For the past 10 years I have had my private practice in New Canaan CT. I am a past member of the American Academy of Environmental Medicine. Also, from 2009 through 2014 I was an adjunct professor at the University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine where I taught 3rd and 4th year medical students environmental medicine.

I would like to read a portion of a letter that was sent to me from a 65 year old patient who lives in New Canaan and has a successful business in the neighboring town of Darien:

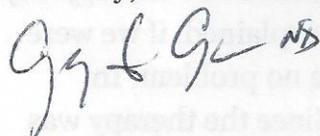
“Recently, I noticed I was feeling very fatigued and having difficulty losing those few extra pounds that, like most of my friends we work-on every year. I went to Dr Gruber and he ran a number of blood and saliva tests that indicated that I had become severely depleted in some critical antioxidant nutrients as well as hormones. It was important to me to fix my deficiencies as soon as possible so Dr Gruber recommended IV therapy. My response was great, let’s get started! Unfortunately, as Dr Gruber explained, if we were in a different state like New Hampshire or Vermont that would be no problem. In Connecticut he must refer me to an MD colleague for treatment. Since the therapy was important to me, I set up a new office visit with the new doctor. This meant going through the new doctor’s new patient intake system and scheduling follow up visits that not only interrupted my work day (since Dr Gruber sees me at my convenience on weekends) but also wasted precious time driving to a completely different town for treatment. In the end the treatment that Dr Gruber recommended was supportive of renewing my health. On the other hand, not being able to see Dr Gruber for a treatment that he is trained and licensed to administer in another State was stressful and did not favorably contribute to my well-being. I should have the freedom to choose the doctor that fits my lifestyle choices and have my doctor treat me within his scope of education and training.

But this IV therapy was not the only treatment that Dr Gruber recommended. Like many of my female friends I experience hot flashes and difficulty falling and staying asleep. Dr Gruber would like to prescribe low doses of female hormones. Again, he must send me to another doctor for treatment that he is very qualified to handle. Why do I need to establish another doctor relationship when I trust Dr Gruber and want him to provide me with the medical care that I need? Seeing two new doctors when my primary doctor is capable and trained to provide these treatments is expensive, time-consuming, and stressful.”

Like many of my ND colleagues in other license states we have patients in Connecticut who suffer with neurological, hormonal, and immunological conditions that are the consequence of environmental causes. Due to our restrictive scope of practice in Connecticut I am unable to treat my patients consistent with the standards that my colleagues use in neighboring states like Vermont and New Hampshire. Ironically, I have taught many of these doctors these treatments when they attended medical school at the University of Bridgeport. Although I refer my patients to other medical practitioners who treat for environmental causes, these referrals are costly, inefficient, and in most cases frustrating to the patient who feels they are inconsequential and being shuffled along to just another doctor.

Modernizing the scope of practice for NDs to include prescriptive authority is very important for the **health** and **well-being** of my patients. I respectfully ask that you include prescriptive authority in H.B. No. 6797.

Sincerely,



Gary S. Gruber ND
Family and Environmental Medicine
68 Old Stamford Road
New Canaan, CT 06840
(203) 966-6360