



Testimony presented by Marlene Murphy-Setzko, M.D.

To the Public Health Committee

On

March 7, 2016

HB 5534 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF NATUROPATHY.

Good Afternoon Senator Gerratana, Rep. Ritter and other distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Marlene Murphy-Setzko, MD, a board certified urologist practicing in Hartford, CT as well as the President of the CT Urology Society. I am here today representing over 1000 physicians in the medical specialties of Dermatology, Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology and Urology in opposition to HB 5534.

In 2010, 2013, 2015 and again this year our Naturopathic colleagues are seeking increased scope of practice and expanded licensure to prescribe medications. This current bill seeks to alter the definition of Naturopathy in the State Statutes, clarify the continuing education requirements, and ultimately ask for prescriptive authority.

According to the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, naturopathic practice “ includes the following diagnostic and therapeutic modalities: clinical and laboratory diagnostic testing, nutritional medicine, botanical medicine, naturopathic physical medicine (including naturopathic manipulative therapy), public health measures, hygiene, counseling, minor surgery, homeopathy, acupuncture, prescription medication, intravenous and injection therapy, and naturopathic obstetrics (natural childbirth)”

“Prescription medication” authority should **NOT** be included. Of the 17 states which offer licensing for Naturopaths (including CT), only 2 permit prescriptive privileges (Oregon and Washington). These two states have very different demographics from CT, and our neighboring states of New York and Massachusetts (which are much more similar to CT) have rejected similar scope expansion requests. The need is not there. The safety of such action is not there.

Training in the proper use of potentially harmful pharmaceuticals transcends several intense hours of studying from a book. In medical school, at least 4 hours per day for over three months in the second year of school are typically devoted to learning the basics of pharmacology. That is at least 240 hours of purely didactic learning. Contrast that to the proposed 72 hours of Naturopathic doctorate programs.

But these hours pale in comparison to the extensive hands-on real world training the MD/DO's receive over the course of medical school, post graduate internships and lengthy residency training. Every single day of this intense training involves interacting with potent pharmaceuticals. Only through such supervised experience can practitioners identify and treat side effects and adverse reactions. Patient safety must come first.

It is commendable that increased continuing education requirements are delineated in this bill, and we respect the acknowledgement that this is essential. However, absolutely nothing can compare to the extensive real world training received by MD/DO's. More study and evidence is required to prove that the proposed contact hours are sufficient in length, supervision, and content.

Residents of Connecticut seeking health services deserve safe and competent care – unfortunately, this bill places the health of the citizens of Connecticut at risk. We urge you to oppose this inappropriate and premature demand for even more privileges.