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Public Hearing – March 7, 2016

Public Health Committee

Testimony Submitted by Representative Jack Hennessy, 127th District

Raised House Bill No. 5534 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF NATUROPATHY

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding **Raised Bill No. 5534 – AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRACTICE OF NATUROPATHY.**

I am in full support of allowing naturopathic doctors in the state of Connecticut to prescribe various medications consistent with their training. The scope of drug category excludes all drug “classes” that are not part of general primary care. To allow these prescribing rights for ND’s will bring Connecticut in-line with VT and other states as generalist family physicians with a focus on wellness and prevention, a type of practitioner we badly need given our chronic disease epidemic.

The UB College of Naturopathic Medicine is the ONLY naturopathic medical school located in a state with a naturopathic medical act that does NOT allow prescriptive authority. This puts the programs at a distinct disadvantage competitively.

There are currently seven similar naturopathic medical schools in the USA, and two in Canada, with two more in development (One in Maryland and one in Puerto Rico). There are currently 17 States with naturopathic licensing laws and 14 of them allow prescriptive authority for ND’s, and none have ever rescinded this authority. In fact, most have expanded it over time. The safety record is impeccable.

Today, people are seeking more comprehensive solutions to include lifestyle changes, dietary advice, botanical medicine, and other approaches in addition to medication options. They only get the medication option with the conventional route. Granting these rights would improve continuity of care and decrease the overall cost of healthcare by decreasing the number of doctors that patients would need to visit and they can get the care they need without delay. In the case of an infection, the ND will have the ability to proscribe the proper antibiotic. While

naturopathic medicine is orientated toward natural remedy's, there are instances when pharmaceutical drugs need to be utilized to help the body heal. To prohibit and deny ND's the right to exert this option is simply wrong. They have the training and this bill increases the level of training and continuing education requirements toward recertification super abundantly.

Lastly, this is an important economic benefit to Bridgeport, as it will increase enrollment and expand the University Of Bridgeport College Of Naturopathic Medicine and help move Connecticut medical options into the 21th century. As this is the third year in a row this bill has been before your committee, I hope I can count on your support.