



SB# 2274 Naturopathic Scope Bill
Dr. Stephanie Nishek, ND
House Human Services Committee
March 23, 2021

Dear Chairman Weisz and Members of the House Human Services Committee,

I'm writing today asking for a **DO PASS** recommendation on SB#2274. I am one of the licensed and practicing Naturopathic Doctors (NDs) here in North Dakota, since 2014, and also serve as the President of the North Dakota Association of Naturopathic Doctors (NDAND).

As President of NDAND, one of my priorities is to make North Dakota a desirable location for more NDs to establish themselves and build their practices. North Dakotans are traveling *hundreds of miles* for the type of care and services Naturopathic Doctors provide. I, myself, maintain two practices in two different cities, 100 miles apart and visit with dozens of people in both locations every week. There simply are not enough of us to meet our population's demand. In order to appeal to prospective NDs and ND students, *we must have a scope of practice that is desirable to doctors who have invested such a substantial amount of time and money into their education and career outlook.*

I also want to proactively address the typical opposition to our scope expansion efforts. The North Dakota Medical Association Board, lobbyist and members are **NOT** the experts in the depth, breadth and adequacy of the naturopathic medical education. Their unreasonable, uncompromising opposition to Naturopathic Doctors being granted lesser prescribing rights than our Physician Assistant and Nurse Practitioner colleagues should carry little to no weight at all.

We came into this session asking for are the same prescriptive rights that all other well trained, independently-practicing healthcare providers in North Dakota have been granted before us. We have already reduced our "ask" in an attempt to appease the NDMA. As you will soon learn, from their opposing testimony and aggressive lobbying, they are absolutely unwilling to engage in an effort to find middle ground when another healthcare profession is perceived as infringing on their "turf." In fact, we are aware of intentional misinformation that the NDMA spread widely while our bill was in the Senate involving a story of a provider who hyper-dosed Vitamin D in an infant which led to hospitalization of that child. While this is, unfortunately, a real documented occurrence, the provider involved was NOT a Naturopathic Doctor. Stories like these are nothing more than a tiresome attempt to discredit any healthcare professional without "MD" after their name. I, too, could share a list of personal and professional examples where MDs have missed, misdiagnosed or mistreated in situations that have led to negative patient outcomes.

My ND colleagues will be providing ample factual information that accurately portrays our education and competency. A number of collaboratively-minded healthcare providers in North Dakota will also be extending their support of our efforts based on their actual experiences and relationships with us.

I would be happy to discuss this further. Please feel free to get in touch for any reason.

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