

# Protect physician-led care

Naturopaths lack the evidence-based medical knowledge and clinical expertise necessary to safely perform surgical procedures, prescribe legend drugs, including controlled substances, and order and interpret diagnostic tests. The best way to support high-quality care is to keep physicians as the leader of the health care team.

## PHYSICIANS ARE TRAINED TO LEAD

### Family physicians (MD, DO)

4 years

3–4 years

12,000–16,000 hours

Postgraduate education



Residency

Clinical training

### Naturopaths (ND)

4 years

None required

1,200 hours (only 850 must involve patient care)

## MEDICAL EDUCATION SHOULD BE BASED ON SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE

The accreditation standards for naturopathic curriculum **do not**:

- Require the curriculum be rooted in the medical model or on evidence-based medicine.
- Specify a required number of pharmacology course hours or required subject matter.
- Include a required number of course hours on diagnostic subject matter.

## MEDICAL TRAINING SHOULD BE COMPREHENSIVE & STANDARDIZED

### Clinical training requires treating ...

Patients who are ill  
Patients experiencing a range of health conditions  
Hospitalized patients  
Infants  
Children and adolescents  
Elderly patients

### Family Physicians

✓  
✓  
✓  
✓  
✓  
✓

### Naturopaths

x  
x  
x  
x  
x  
x

### Simply put, patient safety is threatened when:

- Prescribing of legend drugs, including controlled substances, is in the hands of someone who is not adequately trained in pharmacology.
- Surgery is allowed to be performed by practitioners who have not completed a rigorous or standardized education or clinical training in surgery.
- Medical diagnoses are determined by a provider who did not receive the appropriate training in diagnostic subject matter.
- Patient care is led by a provider whose training may not have covered the patient population or illness the provider purports to treat.

## MYTH

Allowing naturopaths to prescribe medications and perform surgeries will improve access to care.

Allowing naturopaths to prescribe medications will reduce duplicative appointments.

## FACT

The limited number of practicing naturopaths tend to practice in the same locations as allopathic or osteopathic primary care physicians. A patient is likely to live as near to a naturopathic doctor as they do to a physician. Even if they do, major insurers including Medicare often do not cover visits to naturopaths. Expanding the scope of practice of naturopaths will not meaningfully increase access to care.

States should not risk patient safety for the sake of mere convenience.

Safely prescribing medications, performing surgery and interpreting diagnostic tests, depends on the robust standardized education and years of clinical training received in medical or osteopathic school by physicians. Licensing naturopaths to prescribe medications, perform surgeries, or order and interpret diagnostic tests **risks patient safety and does NOT improve access to care.**