

**S.241 Testimony - Margaret Coffey, Naturopathic Physician
Vermont Association of Naturopathic Physicians (VANP)
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When S.247 passed two years ago, language limited the definition of health care professionals who can sign the Health Care Professional Verification Form to medical doctors, naturopathic physicians, physician assistants, and advanced practice registered nurses. The form states: ***“This form is to verify the nature of the disease and its symptoms; this is not a prescription or medical recommendation for the use of marijuana.”*** Both S.241 and S.14 incorporate the amendments proposed by VANP. We urge the House to retain those amendments.

Of those listed, only naturopathic physicians were limited to those who have obtained a prescribing special license.

- Because the form only requires that it be completed by the patient’s health care professional who is treating the patient for a specific illness, there is no reason to require that NDs have a prescribing license for purposes of filling out the form

Of those listed, only naturopathic physicians are required to act within their scope of practice

- It is within the scope of practice for NDs to treat patients for all the illnesses listed on the form, just as it is within the scope of practice of all the other listed practitioners.
- There are consequences in place, both in law and in regulations, which address any practitioner practicing outside their scope of practice. To have language in the law that specifically singles out naturopathic physicians is prejudicial and has negative implications about the profession.

Of those listed, only naturopathic physicians are excluded if they are licensed in NH, MA, or NY

- The law states that the practitioners must be “professionally licensed under substantially equivalent provisions” in other states. If another state’s ND licensure provisions are substantially the same as Vermont, then they should be able to sign the form.

Legal Authority for NDs

- NDs have been licensed to practice naturopathic medicine since 1996.
- Insurance companies were required to cover ND services in 2007 and Medicaid in 2008
- NDs were recognized in law as primary care providers and medical homes in 2012; however, NDs have been practicing primary care for their patients since 1996.
- NDs have been allowed to work independently, without supervision since 2012.

Education

NDs attend four-year doctoral level naturopathic medical schools accredited by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education.

- NDs are broadly trained in the pre-clinical sciences and the clinical disciplines, with an emphasis on health promotion, disease prevention, and treatment based on the stimulation or support of natural processes.
- Their clinical education is designed to prepare them to be primary care providers.
- NDs take rigorous professional board exams and clinical pharmacology testing