

Dear Committee-

I am writing to show support of LD 1128. We desperately need a modernization of the naturopathic doctor scope of practice.

I am a naturopathic doctor practicing in Cumberland Foreside, Maine. I have been practicing at this location for three years and previously practiced in Vermont, which included a two-year residency. The scope of practice in Vermont, where I still hold a license, is more up to date and consistent with our training. When practicing in Vermont, I held a DEA number.

When I moved to Maine, it was and still remains challenging to interpret the scope of the formulary. The language used is confusing. It is not clear what all is included in our formulary, which leads to differences in interpretation. This presents a safety issue.

I would love to be able to prescribe medications that I was trained on in my five years of naturopathic medical school and two years of residency, but I cannot prescribe medications used for asthma, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and mental health to name a few areas on concern. Some of these medications can be life saving for patients such as albuterol for an asthma attack. Since I cannot prescribe these medications in the state of Maine, it means I cannot help patients taper off them when appropriate. I must instruct them to go back to their prescriber for that piece of their care.

This creates numerous barriers for patients. Some of these barriers come from shortages in our health care system. NDs can help with this shortage. Patients who cannot get in easily with their primary care provider or their psychiatrist or who may no longer have a prescribing provider (new to the state or loss of insurance) are at risk. Sometimes their only option is to go to the emergency room.

A number of times I have had a patient with very high blood pressure, and I was concerned that a heart attack or stroke may be imminent. I could not prescribe them medication and had to tell them to go see their primary care provider, which could take months to get in. Just last week, I had a patient that I sent to the ER for high blood pressure management because I could not help her enough under our limited formulary.

This is certainly not a good use of health care dollars. By modernizing our formulary, naturopathic doctors will be able to save patients and insurers money.

Please consider supporting this bill so that Mainers can have better access to healthcare and therefor lead healthier lives. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Dr. Rebecca Morrell, ND

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