



Senator Pinny Beebe-Center
3 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0003
Office (207) 287-1515

Good afternoon Senator Bailey, Representative Mathieson, and esteemed members of the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee, I am Senator Pinny Beebe-Center from Senate District 12, which includes all of Knox County except for the towns of Washington and Isle Au Haut. I am writing today in support of LD 1128, “An Act to Modernize the Formulary for Naturopathic Doctors,” which I have cosponsored.

Naturopathic doctors are trained, certified and licensed doctors who have been practicing in Maine since 1996. They are trained as primary care doctors and have been licensed in Maine under the Board of Complimentary Health Care Providers as complimentary care providers.

Naturopathic doctors have had prescriptive rights in Maine since licensure in 1996. Since that time, there have been no safety or disciplinary infractions brought against Naturopathic doctors for their prescriptions; they have been safely prescribing pharmaceuticals constant with their training for nearly 30 years. There have also been reviews of this formulary since then.

The goal of LD 1128 is to correct that and provide a mechanism by which the ND formulary can undergo routine review.

Every day, NDs work with patients who are on medications for preventable and treatable diseases like diabetes, high blood pressure and elevated cholesterol. When patients work with Naturopaths, they often have improved health outcomes and need to lower or discontinue these medicines. The current structure of the formulary means that patients would have to go back to the prescriber to have their medication changed, resulting in redundant visits and increased cost to the patient, the insurance provider. This also leads to more visits to the PCP’s office, having to use up patient time to change a medication, putting more strain on an already overtaxed health care system. Naturopathic doctors are trained in the use and management of these medicines and how to safely titrate patients off, if needed.

This situation can also result in patient’s being over-medicated while they are waiting for an appointment or they all too often will stop or change medications without supervision, which can be a big safety issue. Additionally, lack of prescriptive access to these medications results in patient trips to Urgent Care or Emergency medicine for acute conditions that are most often handled in out-patient offices when NDs cannot appropriately treat the presenting disease.

The current formulary is confusing to partitioners and pharmacists and is illogical in some cases. Under the current law, Naturopathic doctors can prescribe injectable insulin for a patient, but not oral Metformin, the most common and most well-tolerated treatment for Diabetes. NDs in

Maine can prescribe injectable epinephrine for allergies (EpiPen is an example), but not an albuterol inhaler to help manage a patient's asthma.

For nearly 30 years, Naturopathic doctors have been licensed to practice medicine in Maine with limited prescriptive authority. In that time they have had no complaints or punitive action taken against them for their use of pharmaceuticals. In that time, medicines and treatments have continued to expand and evolve, but the ND formulary has not. It is time to fix this and stop tying the hands of Naturopathic doctors in Maine.

I strongly support LD 1128, and encourage you to do so, too.