

Good afternoon Committee Chair **Senator Donna Bailey**, Co-chair **Representative Lori Gramlich** and honorable members of the **Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services**. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of LD 1128.

My Name is Dr. Barb MacDonald.

In 1998, I completed my naturopathic and Chinese medicine training in Portland, Oregon where I also did my residency, was an associate professor and practiced for 13-years. In 2010, I returned to Maine where I have practiced in the Camden-Rockport area doing general naturopathic and Chinese Medicine with a focus on helping cancer patients navigate conventional treatment.

I am grateful for your time and attention on behalf of the tens of thousands of Mainers who enjoy the benefits of having a naturopathic doctor on their healthcare team.

In comparison to practicing in Oregon, where I had a DEA number and a continually updated prescriptive formulary, since moving back to Maine, there have been hundreds of visits where a patient has asked me to prescribe a medication that I cannot write an order for.

In several cases, having an up-to-date formulary would have allowed me to provide a potentially life saving prescription. In a recent case, a patient presented to my office with headache, fatigue and just not feeling well. Upon taking her vitals, I found her to have a blood pressure of 180/120. Recognizing that this was not a place for botanical treatment, I had to inform her that she was in need of an antihypertensive medication that I could not prescribe to her with Maine's out-of-date Naturopathic formulary. I asked if we could together call her PCP's office and was told that she didn't have one and had been on the waitlist at PenBay for months to get one. I encouraged her to go to the emergency room and explained to her the potential consequences of not doing so. I even offered to drive her there myself. Due to a \$10,000 deductible, she refused to go to the emergency department. I reached out to a medical colleague who was able to see her in six weeks. In the meantime, she was given botanicals and lifestyle changes, acupuncture and guidelines as to when to call 911 and she was fortunate to not have had a stroke or worse. In this and many other cases, my patients have suffered unnecessary delays in essential care that I could have and should have been able to provide.

Some of you, may have been patients of my late father, Dr. Dick MacDonald who practiced at Waterville Osteopathic Hospital during my childhood. In my written testimony, I included a letter that he wrote in 2022 to a member of the Osteopathic Board in support of naturopathic doctors. He would have been proud to submit his testimony to you. In short, he said ***"By limiting legislative changes to update the ND law to be on par with other new England states, we may be losing good doctors from practicing within their scope of training who would otherwise have practiced in Maine's rural communities."***

My father, and his brother, Dr. Earnest MacDonald testified in 1965 in front the United States Congress resulting in what was a professional turning point for Osteopathy allowing for Medicare coverage for Osteopaths. In turn, I am proud to be standing up for the rights of my profession as they were for theirs.

If you pass L.D. 1128 "An Act to Modernize the Formulary for Naturopathic Doctors" –

- 1) We will have thousands of happier and safer patients not experiencing delays in necessary care
- 2) I will be happier to know that I can prescribe a potentially life-saving medication without having to ask a local medical colleague if they would be willing to see my patient and prescribe.
- 3) We will have fewer confused pharmacists
- 4) We will see a wonderful increase in young licensed NDs practicing and raising their families here in rural communities serving Mainers.

Thank you again for allowing me to provide my testimony in support of L.D. 1128.