



House Human Services Committee

SB 2274

March 23, 2021

Chairman Weisz and Committee Members, I am Dr. Josh Ranum – a physician in Hettinger, ND where I practice internal medicine and I am also Vice President of the ND Medical Association.

During my years in student training, I vividly remember witnessing a drug-related death. He was an older man from the Rugby area. He was appropriately prescribed a sulfa drug for an infection – a four-dollar medication among the most commonly used antibiotics in the world. He had no allergies nor any dangerous drug interactions but developed bone marrow failure from the medication. He died in the ICU suffering a rather gruesome death – something I will never forget.

This is one example of how the complexities of prescribing medications can lead to detrimental consequences. Many years of complex pharmacological training can still fail patients even in situations when practitioners have many years of training and oversight.

The circumstances of inappropriately prescribing becomes more critical when a provider seeks permissions beyond their scope of practice. This is the case with Senate Bill 2274 - naturopaths seeking to expand their practice to prescribing, dispensing, administering, and procuring legend drugs.

Although we respect naturopathic practices that complement medicine within the scope of practice, naturopaths are not adequately trained to prescribe. Proper training takes years of experience and supervision by *experienced prescribers* and classroom hours are not a substitute for prescribing experience.

It is important to know that naturopathic training is fundamentally different from a physician, nurse practitioner, or physician assistant. Years are spent on proper training and experience for prescribing. Earning prescribing rights is fundamentally different than learning the principals – or the laying the foundation – of prescribing. For example, as a medical student, I did an orthopedic surgery rotation. I'm not qualified to replace a hip. As a student and resident, I did several months of nephrology and oncology. Yet, I'm not writing dialysis orders or administering chemotherapy drugs.

This zeal to prescribe medications, all of which have potential consequences, without adequate training and supervision highlights how disastrous your vote to grant prescriptive authority could be. Furthermore, NDMA has concerns that the board regulating naturopaths in North Dakota does not have the expertise in this area to properly regulate and discipline its members.

Allowing inadequately trained and regulated naturopaths to prescribe legend drugs puts your constituents in harm's way.

On behalf of myself as a physician and The North Dakota Medical Association, the primary concern with this bill is patient safety. For this reason, we ask you to give Senate Bill 2274 a DO NOT PASS.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I would be happy to answer any questions.