

HOUSE HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
March 23, 2021

TESTIMONY OF NORTH DAKOTA BOARD OF MEDICINE
SENATE BILL NO. 2274

Chairman Weisz, members of the Committee, my name is Dr. Brenda Miller. I am here on behalf of the North Dakota Board of Medicine testifying in opposition to SB 2274. This is my 6th year serving on this board and I have been a licensed physician for almost 25 years.

I was present during a previous session testifying on a similar bill. Now the bill has come before you again with the addition of the ability to prescribe all legend drugs and testosterone, as a controlled substance. It is the mission of our Board to protect the health, welfare, and safety of the citizens of North Dakota. My concern, as well as that of our own board, is the education and training of naturopaths to prescribe such medicines.

Since my last testimony, I reviewed the naturopathic curriculum. All the courses related to medicine are solely naturopathic, focusing on disease prevention through herbal and botanical remedies, homeopathic medications, non-drug approaches, food as medicine and natural treatments. The coursework does not focus on pharmaceutical medications but instead focuses on natural ways, herbs, and non-drug approaches to treat the patient. No training at all in applying pharmaceutical medicines in disease states.

As physicians, our undergraduate training focuses on physics, biology, and organic cellular chemistry. This provides a base of how medications work. Once in medical school we have advanced courses in immunology, anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry. Our pharmacy classes are directed toward how these medications work; how to evaluate a patient; when and more importantly when NOT to use antibiotics; how to choose the right lipid, HTN, anxiety medication; etc. In addition to 4-5 years of undergraduate education, physicians have 4 years medical school, plus 3 to 8 years residency.

Our oath says "Do No Harm".

In regards to the controlled substances we have a rigorous monitoring system. A two-step process is used to prescribe including DEA# and fingerprint, as paper prescriptions are no longer safe. This is all monitored through the Prescription Drug monitoring program, a committee on which I serve. I believe that the few states that do allow the naturopaths to prescribe any controlled substances require oversight by licensed physicians.

Testimony submitted by naturopaths compare their education to that of a physician assistant or nurse practitioner, in inaccurate comparison in reviewing the actual curriculum and experience required of these licensed professions. In addition, physician assistants are required by law to have a written collaborate agreement with a physician for the first four thousand hours of practice, and thereafter must continue to collaborate with an appropriate member of the patient's health care team. This allows for additional training and oversight even after a physician assistant's thorough education, a component missing from a naturopath's education and licensure requirements.

For the above reasons, I would request a "do not pass" on this bill. Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions.