

SENATE BILL REPORT

HB 1546

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, March 24, 2005

Title: An act relating to naturopathic physicians.

Brief Description: Regulating naturopathic physicians.

Sponsors: Representatives Clibborn, Bailey, Cody, Skinner, Chase, Campbell, McIntire and Dickerson.

Brief History: Passed House: 3/08/05, 81-15.

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 3/23/05, 3/24/05 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Thibaudeau, Vice Chair; Deccio, Ranking Minority Member; Franklin, Kastama and Parlette.

Staff: Stephanie Yurcisin (786-7438)

Background: Naturopathy is the practice of the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of disorders of the body by stimulation and support of the human body's natural processes. The practice includes: manual manipulation; the use of nutrition and food science; physical modalities; homeopathy; hygiene and immunization; and the administration, prescription, and use of medicines of mineral, animal, and botanical origin.

Naturopaths may use medicines that are derived from: animal organs, tissues, and oils; minerals; and plants. They may also use legend vitamins, minerals, whole gland thyroid, and other traditional herbal and botanical pharmacopeia. The Washington Administrative Code interprets this to include legend topical ointments, creams, and lotions containing antiseptics as well as legend topical, local anesthetics. Naturopaths may also use intermuscular injections of vitamin B12 preparations.

Summary of Bill: The term "medicines of mineral, animal, and botanical origin" is replaced with the term "naturopathic medicines." The medicines that naturopaths may use include vitamins, minerals, botanical medicines, homeopathic medicines, hormones, and legend drugs and controlled substances that are consistent with naturopathic medical practice and established by the Secretary of Health (Secretary) in rule. The current prohibition on controlled substances is revised to permit the use of codeine and testosterone in Schedules III, IV, and V of the Uniform Controlled Substances Act. The Secretary, in consultation with the Naturopathic Advisory Committee and the Board of Pharmacy, will establish requirements for the use of controlled substances, including educational and training standards.

The definition of "minor office procedures" is modified to include care and procedures for lesions as well as injections of substances consistent with the practice of naturopathic medicine and rules established by the Secretary. The definition of "common diagnostic procedures" eliminates references to superficial scrapings and prohibitions on surgical procedures and restates the prohibition as applying to incision or excision beyond a minor office procedure.

Naturopathic education programs are required to be accredited.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: Some patients prefer to have naturopaths as their primary care physicians; this small scope change will make that a reality.

Testimony Against: This bill does not need to pass for naturopaths to be a part of the healthcare system and the necessity for them to be more like MD's does not exist. This is a slippery slope towards full prescriptive authority.

Who Testified: PRO: Representative Clibborn, prime sponsor; Terry Kohl, Christian Dodge, Washington Association of Naturopathic Physicians.

CON: Carl Nelson, Washington State Medical Association.