December 16, 2019

RE: Comments Regarding Administrative Rules for Naturopathic Doctors - BORND: 273 CMR

Dear Board Counsel:

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP), the national professional association representing licensed Naturopathic Doctors (NDs), wholeheartedly supports licensure of Naturopathic Doctors in Massachusetts and applaud the work you have done drafting regulations consistent with the intent of the law.

We respectfully submit a few comments in areas of the rules that we believe could be modified to enhance clarity and minimize confusion for providers, patients, and regulators.

**In Section 2**

1. (Under Definitions) we noticed that there are no definition for minor office procedures, naturopathic evaluation, non-invasive procedures, parenteral therapy, radiography, and specialty practice boards for licensees. These definitions should either be in the regulatory or the sub-regulatory level. Clear definitions will not only help the profession understand their role in the Commonwealth, but will help avoid the confusion that we have seen in other states that lacked clear definitions where the licensing board needed to involve the Attorney General’s office to interpret even simple things like whether a licensee could order an x-ray image. We strongly hope that you work to build these definitions.

2. Better define procedures licensees may undertake in the office, and better define procedures related to laboratory orders. Again, this should either be at the regulatory level or the sub-regulatory level, but it should definitely be further defined.

3. Within the definition of ‘Supervision’, there should be the possibility of supervising other individuals, not only ND students. There are many integrative medicine clinics, hospitals, community clinics, and other institutions that choose to hire naturopathic doctors as medical directors to oversee their programs. This requires that the ND have explicit definitions that outline who (i.e., what other professions) they can supervise.

**In Section 3**

1. Under Section 3.03 (2) (b) after national licensing examination, there should be added ‘or its equivalent’ as was passed in the law. There are two reasons why this is important, aside from being consistent with the law that passed. First, there are naturopathic physicians who were licensed and took examinations that were available before the national examination, pre 1987. Those examinations are equivalent to NPLEX in the eyes of other states. The second reason is that there is the possibility that other states or provinces may choose to administer their own state examinations and not take part of the national examination, or that the national examination may cease to exist. This has in fact taken place in Ontario within the last 2 years. Because of this, the law was written to clearly articulate ***national examination or its equivalent.***

2. Under 3.04 (1) (a), it states that applicant must pass NPLEX, but it should read “national board examination, such as NPLEX, ***or its equivalent***,” for the same reasons as articulated above.

3. Under 3.04 (3): Eligibility by Reciprocity, please consider removing Sections b-e, as this process makes getting a license more difficult by this manner than any other manner, which is actually the opposite of what was envisioned by reciprocity, and is not in step with any other state’s ND law related to reciprocity.

**In Section 4**

1. 4.03 (2)(b) 3: Practice Requirements, it seems impossible to record evidence of ‘ALL’ treatment facts and options provided to a patient. The word ‘ALL’ should be removed from the sentence. We think that this is not possible for any professional to accomplish.

We appreciate the opportunity to share our comments and thank you for the work you all are doing to complete the rules and regulations process for NDs. A proper system of registration of NDs protects citizens by ensuring the safe practice of naturopathic medicine by qualified and licensed NDs in Massachusetts.

I would be glad to answer any questions you may have, and I can be reached directly at 202-849-6306. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Laura Culberson Farr

Executive Director