



Naturopathic Physicians as PCPs in Community Health Settings

Training and Licensure

Education / Training:

- There are 7 accredited schools in North America offering doctorates in Naturopathic Medicine
- 4 year, doctoral program
- 4100 total hours, 1200 clinical hours
- 2 years biomedical sciences, 2 years clinical sciences
- Clinical training primarily in ambulatory care settings including community health rotations
- Residency training available
- Approximately 400 annual ND graduates

In practice Naturopathic Doctors (NDs):

- Provide Primary Care
- Provide lifestyle counseling
- Administer vaccinations
- Prescribe drugs and natural medicines
- Perform physicals and gynecological exams
- Collaborate with other healthcare providers
- Educate, advise, advocate and empower patients

Licensing and scope of practice in Washington State:

- In Washington State, NDs are licensed as Primary Care physicians
- Can diagnose and treat disease
- Can order all diagnostic tests
- Can prescribe most drugs used in Primary Care settings (all legend drugs)
- Can use any route of administration for medication
- Can perform minor office procedures such as Pap smears, skin biopsy, removal of foreign body, suturing and cryotherapy
- Credentialed with Medicaid, and many other insurance providers

Limitations:

- NDs are not currently eligible for the Suboxone X waiver. NDs are currently lobbying for access to this training
- Not yet Medicare-eligible; first VA contract granted 2019, additional TBD

- Cannot currently prescribe schedule drugs, except testosterone and codeine

Facts CHCs should know about NDs

- NDs are credentialed with Medicaid in Washington and Oregon.
- NDs are trained in and use the same CPT and ICD-10 codes as other providers.
- The Naturopathic Academy of Primary Care Physicians (NAPCP) fully endorses the current CDC vaccination schedule.
- NDs are trained in current USPSTF screening/treatment guidelines.
- Including NDs on your team has the potential to attract patients that are not currently accessing care.
- Naturopathic Physicians are qualified for wrap-around payments through HRSA.
- NDs are eligible for the Washington Health Professionals Loan Repayment Program (HPLRP). All ND grads are eligible for 10-year public service loan forgiveness.
- NDs are trained in evidence-based medicine, point of care tools, and critical evaluation of medical literature/research.
- NDs are trained in how to safely prescribe pharmaceuticals, botanicals, and nutritional supplements alongside one another.
- NDs are trained in physical medicine techniques that can be billed as procedures through CPT and ICD-10 coding and can help some patients manage pain with less medication.
- ND students have expressed high levels of interest in working with underserved populations and in integrative medicine settings.

Creating a new Residency Pathway

In Washington and Oregon, Naturopathic medical students graduate with the scope of practice to work as Primary Care Providers. Yet currently only a small percentage of these graduates find their way into CHCs and other Primary Care settings. Creating new residency pathways for ND graduates can help address the Primary Care shortage and represents a mostly untapped resource for CHCs to develop talent internally.

Key points:

- ND residents at CHCs may be supervised by MDs and DOs
- ND graduates could enter CHCs as residents and complete multi-year residencies
- Demand is high for new ND residency sites. CHCs could be very selective and choose from a number of qualified graduates
- ND residents could also access consults from experienced Naturopathic Physicians who are currently working in primary care/community health care settings