

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5581

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Health & Long-Term Care, February 27, 2001

Title: An act relating to naturopathic physicians.

Brief Description: Regulating naturopathic physicians.

Sponsors: Senators Thibaudeau, Roach, Costa and Kohl-Welles.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Health & Long-Term Care: 2/12/01, 2/27/01 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5581 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Thibaudeau, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Costa and Fraser.

Staff: Joan K. Mell (786-7447)

Background: Naturopathy is the practice of the art and science of the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of disorders of the body by stimulations or support, or both, of the natural processes of the human body. Bastyr University located in Kenmore, Washington has a Naturopathic Medicine Program. Bastyr is accredited by the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges, and the program is accredited by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education.

Students are required to participate in more than 4,300 hours of course work and clinical training. Courses include: basic sciences such as anatomy, physiology, and pharmacology; clinical sciences such as cardio-pulmonary medicine, geriatrics and gynecology; and modality courses including botanical medicine, homeopathy, and physical medicine.

In February of 1999, the Department of Health issued a Naturopathic Scope Sunrise Review pursuant to referral of HB 2286. The Department of Health recommended expansion of prescriptive authority to include legend drugs and controlled substances Schedules III-V with some limitations. Sunrise also recommended revision of the current definition of minor office procedures, clarification of authority to employ persons to assist with colonic therapy, and limitations on compounding injectables.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The definition of minor office procedures is expanded to include removal of lesions, trigger point therapy, dermal stimulation, and allergy testing and treatment.

Radiography is defined as ordering, but not interpreting, radiographic and other imaging studies, including ultrasonic images.

Naturopathic medicines are defined to include legend antibiotics, antifungal agents, arithelmintics, bacitracin, sulfuramides, nitroturans, methenamines, oxalodinones, lencosamides, macrolides, erythromycin, tetracyclines, quinolones, codeine, hydrocone, and testosterone, consistent with naturopathic medical practice and rules developed by the secretary. In addition, vitamins, minerals, botanical medicines, homeopathic medicines, hormones, and other physiologic substances as exemplified in standard naturopathic medical texts and journals including nondrug contraceptive devices. Naturopathic physicians may administer injections appropriate to naturopathic medicine, including saline infusion for dehydrated patients. A naturopathic physician may compound, dispense, or sell naturopathic medicines not commonly available by prescription but is limited for injectable medications. The naturopathic advisory committee in consultation with the Board of Pharmacy shall develop parameters for the use of controlled substances.

Naturopathic physicians may not employ the term "acupuncture" to describe any services they provide. The Department of Health must develop a work group that reports back to the Legislature areas of practice that should require an endorsement.

Naturopathic physicians may employ persons to assist in the preparation and monitoring of colonic therapy.

The Department of Health is given rule-making authority.

Naturopaths are renamed naturopathic physicians– and their practice is referred to as naturopathic medicine.– Educational program– is redefined as an accredited program preparing persons for the practice of naturopathic medicine.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: The provision regarding surgery is eliminated and language is substituted that explains what was intended: lesions, trigger point therapy, dermal stimulation, and allergy testing and treatment. Specific drugs are listed as naturopathic medicines, including antibiotics, steroids, and pain medications. Use of the drugs specified as naturopathic medicines cannot be used unless the naturopath meets the parameters, including education and training requirements, developed in consultation with the board of pharmacy.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

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

Testimony For: Changes to scope of practice are needed to save the patient money and time. Further, accessible treatment alternatives would improve the health of patients. Pharmacology training is essentially the same as the University of Washington. Admission standards are quite high for students.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: PRO: Jeff Larsen, Jennifer Booker, Bruce Milliman, WANP; Jane Gultinan, Jeff Novack, Sally Ringdahl, BASTYR; CON: Carl Nelson, WSMA.

