

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SSB 5152

As Passed House:
April 4, 2011

Title: An act relating to naturopathic physicians.

Brief Description: Regarding naturopathic physicians.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Pflug, Keiser and Kohl-Welles).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care & Wellness: 3/10/11, 3/16/11 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 4/4/11, 91-4.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Makes changes to the scope of practice for licensed naturopaths.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE & WELLNESS

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 10 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Jinkins, Vice Chair; Schmick, Ranking Minority Member; Bailey, Clibborn, Green, Harris, Kelley, Moeller and Van De Wege.

Staff: Jim Morishima (786-7191).

Background:

Naturopathic medicine is the art and science of the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of disorders of the body through the natural processes of the body. Naturopathic medicine includes:

- manipulation (mechanotherapy);
- the prescription, dispensing, and use of nutrition and food science;

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- physical modalities; i.e., the use of physical, chemical, electrical, and other noninvasive modalities such as heat, cold air, light, water in any of its forms, sound, massage, and therapeutic exercise;
- minor office procedures;
- homeopathy;
- naturopathic medicines;
- hygiene and immunization;
- nondrug contraceptive devices;
- common diagnostic procedures; and
- suggestion.

Summary of Bill:

Naturopaths are no longer limited to noninvasive physical modalities and nondrug contraceptive devices. Instead, naturopaths are authorized to use:

- physical modalities that do not exceed the physical modalities used on the effective date of the act in minor office procedures or common diagnostic procedures; and
- contraceptive devices.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available for House Bill 1228.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) This bill removes terms that are inconsistent with the current practice of naturopathy. Currently, naturopaths can prescribe birth control hormones or birth control devices, but cannot prescribe birth control devices embedded with birth control hormones. The term "invasive" is inconsistent with the current scope of practice for naturopaths, which includes invasive procedures such as blood draws and minor office procedures. Removal of the term "invasive" will also open the door for new technology to be authorized by rule instead of by statute.

(Opposed) This bill is the first step toward allowing naturopaths to perform minor surgeries. The bill also increases the prescriptive authority for naturopaths. This bill would be more appropriate for sunrise review to see whether naturopaths are trained to do these things.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Bob May, Washington Association of Naturopathic Physicians.

(Opposed) Carl Nelson, Washington State Medical Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.