
Health Care Committee

HB 1862

Brief Description: Regulating naturopathic physicians.

Sponsors: Representatives Ruderman, Pflug, Cody, Skinner, Clibborn, Benson, Chase, Anderson, Campbell, Conway and Dickerson.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Expands the types of medications that naturopaths may prescribe, administer, and use as well as the methods of administration .
- Allows naturopaths to provide care and perform procedures pertaining to lesions.

Hearing Date: 2/25/03

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

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 scope of practice statement describing naturopathic medicine is revised to include a description of the practice as a progression from treating patients with the least interventive, natural treatments to more interventive prescriptive medicines only when necessary.

The term "medicines of mineral, animal, and botanical origin" is replaced with the term "naturopathic medicines." The medicines that licensed naturopaths may use are revised in several aspects. First, the current list of topical and oral drugs that naturopaths may administer is revised to include other substances identified in naturopathic medical texts, journals, and pharmacopeia. The reference to topical and oral administration of these drugs is removed.

Second, the current use of legend drugs limited to vitamins, minerals, whole gland thyroid, and other traditional herbal and botanical pharmacopeia, is redefined to allow legend antibiotics as established in the 2001 edition of "Drug Facts and Comparisons."

Third, the use of intermuscular injections limited to vitamin B12 to address a deficiency is expanded to include intramuscular, subcutaneous, and intradermal injections. Intravenous injections are only permitted to provide parenteral nutrients and saline to dehydrated patients.

Finally, 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 and as consistent with naturopathic practices. The Department of Health will adopt rules to address the forms, doses and uses of these drugs. The Naturopathic Advisory Committee, in consultation with 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. 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: Requested on February 21, 2003.

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