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The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians Urges Authorities to Include and Use Licensed Naturopathic Doctors in Plans to Combat the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic

The Association calls for increased access to care and telemedicine as a way to promote health and safety of those at the highest risk.

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP), representing 8,000 licensed naturopathic doctors (NDs) in the United States, encourages all government officials coordinating the national response to the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) to utilize all licensed healthcare professionals in this health emergency, including NDs. [Licensed](#) NDs work [collaboratively](#) across all forms of medicine, and in regulated states are already [integrated](#) into health systems. Serving in primary and specialty care, NDs are ready, willing, and able to support other medical professionals in changing the trajectory of this public health crisis.

Health literacy and patient education are central components of the naturopathic doctor's approach to [patient-centered care](#). Many current public health practices and lifestyle recommendations are [foundational principles](#) of naturopathic medicine and inform our approach to support public health efforts through this current pandemic. We stand in solidarity with our colleagues at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), and State and Local governments in promoting essential public health measures to reduce the burden on U.S. and global healthcare systems.

We call on Federal, State and Local authorities to engage naturopathic doctors in emergency measures to supplement the healthcare workforce during this crisis, recognizing:

- NDs are trained comparably to conventional doctors to diagnose and triage according to presenting symptoms, refer to the appropriate level of care, and support patients during at-home symptom management.
- NDs practice patient-centered medicine and tailor personalized care plans. In addition to all public health recommendations, NDs employ a toolkit of treatment approaches that can be used to support the body's inherent immune capacity to

prevent viral infections, address viral infections directly, ease symptoms in those infected, and support recovery during post-infection care.

Further, we recommend the following actions be taken to empower licensed naturopathic doctors to promote the health and safety of those at highest risk:

- **Increase access to care:** Licensed NDs can serve in states that have declared states of emergency and are calling for volunteer healthcare practitioners to prevent their healthcare systems from becoming overwhelmed.
- **Increase access to Telemedicine services:** We call on insurance providers who currently cover the services of licensed NDs to cover telehealth services provided by NDs, following the recent Telehealth guidelines issued by CMS. This will allow NDs to continue treating patients with chronic diseases or comorbidities that make them more susceptible to SARS-CoV-2, and will allow patients to stay safely at home.
- **Expedite research on novel agents:** Many agents in the naturopathic medicine toolkit have been shown to have a pharmacological effect on related viruses. Naturopathic doctors are the only licensed health care providers trained in the science and clinical use of these agents. We encourage the rapid exploration and study of novel agents that may serve to slow the progression of this particular pandemic, inclusive of relevant research coming out of countries with strong histories of using traditional medicines safely and effectively.

AANP President, Robert Kachko, ND, LAc, stated, "Naturopathic doctors are well-equipped to diagnose and refer to the most appropriate level of care based on clinical presentation and diagnostic staging, supporting continued access to our limited local healthcare resources for our most vulnerable populations. In particular, we encourage those individuals who test positive to the SARS-CoV-2 virus but are instructed by healthcare authorities to self-quarantine at home to receive personalized care from naturopathic doctors via telemedicine."

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians and its affiliated organizations will remain a resource to our colleagues in health and medicine, working to limit this pandemic and ensure the continued health and safety of our nation.

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About the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) is the professional association that represents licensed naturopathic physicians. AANP strives to make naturopathic medicine available to every American, and to increase recognition of naturopathic physicians as the identified authorities on natural medicine. Learn more at www.naturopathic.org.