

February 3, 2009

Dear Supporter of Naturopathic Medicine,

I am writing to you with some very sobering news. The licensing body for California Naturopathic Doctors is slated for elimination under Governor Schwarzenegger's latest budget proposal. The California Naturopathic Doctors Association has been working very hard over the last month to deal with this problem through direct discussion with the Governor's office and other legislators. We have made significant inroads but now we need your help. A significant outcry from the public at this point will aid our cause.

Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions that will help you understand the situation. Included is information and instructions on how you can help to preserve this essential medicine in the state of California.

### **How did this happen?**

Like the nation as a whole, California is in a huge budget crisis. The government is estimating a \$41 billion deficit. In an effort to reduce the deficit, Governor Schwarzenegger is making deep cuts everywhere. His budget proposal also calls for measures aimed at decreasing the size of government and includes the elimination of the Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine. No provision is made in his plan for any alternative process for the licensing or management of NDs in California. As yet, we do not know what this will mean for us but this could represent a serious threat to our ability to practice and to be your Doctor.

### **What is the Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine?**

The Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine administers the Naturopathic Doctors Act passed into law in 2003. The Bureau's main functions are

- Issuing licenses to NDs
- Disciplining licensed NDs found to have caused injury to patients
- Pursuing unlicensed individuals who call themselves NDs

The Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine is within the Department of Consumer Affairs, along with comparable bodies for Medical Doctors, Osteopaths, Acupuncturists and many other professional groups.

### **How much does the bureau cost?**

The Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine is actually self-funding, and is therefore budget neutral. This was a requirement in order to get the Bureau up and running after The Naturopathic Doctors Act passed. We even had a small reserve last year. Unfortunately, however, this is not just about the money. The Governor believes that smaller government will be more efficient and cheaper overall.

### **Were there any other reasons given?**

The Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine is the second smallest bureau in California. Although our profession is growing swiftly (250% in the last 3 years), we are still only 350 doctors. Also, there have been no claims against NDs by the public. While this is clearly a good sign, it also suggests to the Department of Consumer Affairs that the Bureau may not be necessary to protect the public, which is the primary purpose of the Bureau in their eyes.

### **Where can I find the actual recommendations from the Governor's office?**

You can see the proposal here:

<http://www.dof.ca.gov/budget/historical/2009-10/documents/Continuing%20CPR.pdf>

### **What has the CNDA (California Naturopathic Doctors Association) done so far?**

The CNDA and its lobbyists have been working tirelessly on strategy, producing background and educational materials, and preparing comprehensive 'packages' for everyone we meet with. We have met several times in person and on the phone with

- The Naturopathic Bureau Chief
- Senior staff at the Department of Consumer Affairs
- Senior staff members of the Governor's administration
- Members of the Business and Professions Committee
- Other important legislators and their staff

### **Do you have a lawyer?**

- Yes, the CNDA has retained legal counsel that specializes in health care law. They have produced a brief that identifies the legal challenges that could be raised if the Bureau were eliminated. We shared these findings with the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Governor's office, and will provide them to legislators.

### **What will the CNDA do next?**

Our immediate plans are as follows:

- Garner as much political support as possible in both the senate and assembly. We had a Lobby Day on Monday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> where groups of our NDs met with dozens of legislators.
- Secure a main legislator who will serve as our chief "champion" (as Senator Burton was with our initial legislation in 2004)
- Prepare to deal with potential opposition
- Raise money to support these costly efforts (lobbyist, legal counsel, PR, support materials, etc.)
- Continue to meet with relevant parties
- Continue to explore legal defense
- Encourage you to write emails and to visit your legislators, asking them to oppose this proposal and educate them on what Naturopathic Medicine has done for you.

### **Can I contact California legislators directly?**

Yes, if you are a resident in California, we encourage you to write to your state legislators. You can do this in a couple of ways:

- The quickest and easiest way to do this is to use our automated system where there is a pre-written letter that can be personalized by you. You simply go to the link below and you will see the letter and the editable portion where you can write your own note, and then you fill-in your name and address and submit it. Your letter will automatically go to your correct representatives based on your address. This is the website link to do this: <http://capwiz.com/naturopathic/issues/alert/?alertid=12551186>.
- Or you can directly write your legislators a personal letter and mail it to their office. The last page is an example of a letter you can write, and personalize it with your own experience.

- You can call or meet with your legislators and ask them to oppose the elimination of the Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine.

If you don't use our automated system, to find out who represents you in the state legislature please visit: <http://192.234.213.69/lmapsearch/framepage.asp>. Remember that each geographic area will have two representatives – one from the senate and one from the assembly.

If you are going to call or meet with your legislator, we suggest that you contact Katherine Kleine at ([executive@calnd.org](mailto:executive@calnd.org)) or our Legislative Committee Chair Marco Vespignani, ND ([drmarco@calnd.org](mailto:drmarco@calnd.org)) to get a copy of our talking points.

### **How else can I help?**

- You can donate money to the CNDA. Our efforts will cost a minimum of \$50,000, but will likely be double that. The Executive Committee of the CNDA has already donated \$3000 and directly secured another \$2000. But we need much more!
- You can help us raise more money! Ask friends, and relatives to support our ability to stay in business. Talk to Katherine Kleine or Fundraising Chair Simon Barker, ND ([drbarker@calnd.org](mailto:drbarker@calnd.org)) if you have ideas or connections that you think will be fruitful.

To make a donation, please go to the [www.calnd.org](http://www.calnd.org) homepage and click on the big yellow “Donate” button. You can also send checks to:  
CNDA, 600 S. Lake Ave., Ste. 308, Pasadena, CA 91106

Thank you for your support!

The California Naturopathic Doctors Association

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(Sample letter to legislators)

Dear (Assemblyperson or Senator) \_\_\_\_\_,

I am writing to express my concern over Governor Schwarzenegger's recent budget proposals that include eliminating the Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine.

Naturopathic medicine is a comprehensive health care system that combines a variety of natural treatments with conventional medical standards of care and state of the art diagnostics. California state licensed Naturopathic Doctors attend four-year post-graduate medical schools with federally-recognized accreditation. This includes the same medical sciences training as conventional Medical Doctors with an additional focus on natural approaches to treatment. Naturopathic medicine is a growing field, with about 350 licensed NDs in California today, and 1000 doctors expected over the next 5 years. Naturopathic Doctors regularly diagnose disease and prescribe both drugs and non-prescription substances for the curing and mitigation of disease. It is illegal for anyone to do so without a license issued by the state. In the absence of the Bureau, some other Government agency would be required to perform this action, or Naturopathic Doctors would not be able to stay in practice.

The Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine which Governor Schwarzenegger has proposed to eliminate is self-funding and places a small regulatory burden on the State. The majority of the administrative functions of the Bureau - including the issuing of licenses and most actions related to enforcement – are primarily managed by one administrative person at the Bureau. Enforcement includes protecting the public from unqualified practitioners calling themselves “doctors” as well as ensuring licensed NDs practice within their scope. For the cost of one administrative person, the State of California benefits as follows:

- \* \$100,000 per year in licensing fees paid by Naturopathic Doctors
- \* \$1 million in income tax paid by Naturopathic Doctors
- \* Over \$1 million in sales tax revenue collected from the sales of nutritional supplements by Naturopathic Doctors
- \* Millions of dollars saved in Medi-Cal expenses from patients of Naturopathic Doctors who chose to utilize proven non-prescription drug therapies to control health problems such as diabetes, high cholesterol and wide array of chronic and acute ailments.

As you and your fellow legislators look for ways to reduce the budget, please know that Naturopathic Medicine is part of the solution. Let us help you make Californians healthy and greatly reduce the state's long-term health care burden. Please support Naturopathic Medicine in California and do not allow the administration to eliminate the Bureau.

Sincerely,