

Massachusetts Becomes the 20th State Where Naturopaths Can Hurt You



By Julianna LeMieux — January 14, 2017



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A naturopath is [not a physician](#) ^[1], should not be able to substitute for one, act like one or even play one on TV.

However, in the last few weeks, the Massachusetts legislature passed bill [2335](#) ^[2] "An Act establishing a board of registration in naturopathy," that will give the profession of naturopaths legitimacy - one of the worst moves that they could have made for the health of the people of the "bay state."

The heart of the bill designates that a board will be instituted to determine the role of naturopaths and define their abilities and limits. The five person board will be made up of two naturopaths, one physician who works with naturopaths, one pharmacologist and a member of the public - which is absolutely ridiculous.

That is like a board on the regulation of cigarettes being made up two smokers, one person who sells cigarettes, one person who studies the effects of nicotine, and a random person from off the street.

The bill addressed more than the board, however. It also outlines the following regarding how naturopaths practice. It states that they can work to

(i) prevent and treat human illness, injury or disease through education, dietary or nutritional advice and the promotion of healthy ways of living

- (ii) use non-invasive physical examinations and the ordering of clinical and laboratory procedures from licensed clinics or laboratories to evaluate injuries, illnesses and conditions in the human body
- (iii) dispense, administer, order and prescribe natural medicines of mineral, animal or botanical origin, including, but not limited to, food products or extracts, vitamins, minerals, enzymes, digestive aids, natural hormones, plant substances, homeopathic preparations, natural antibiotics, topical medicines and nonprescription drugs, therapeutic devices and barrier contraceptives to prevent or treat illnesses, injuries and conditions of the human body
- (iv) use manual mechanical manipulation of body structures or tissues
- (v) use naturopathic physical medicine to maintain or restore normal physiological functioning of the human body
- (vi) must track and document the immunization status of a patient under 18 years of age and the required referral of that patient to a primary care or collaborative care physician where evidence exists that the individual has not been immunized.

This bill has been in the works for years, as naturopaths push to be able to practice in more states. Currently, Massachusetts makes 20 states (including Wash. DC) where naturopaths can be licensed. Up until just last week, there was a glimmer of hope for all of us that Governor Charlie Baker would not sign the bill, rendering it ineffective.

However, in a blow to evidence based science and medicine, he signed the bill.

As someone who has spent more of my life in Massachusetts than in any other state, being fortunate to work in world class scientific and medical institutions, I am disappointed in my home state and concerned about the growing influence that naturopaths are having on people's health across the country. (1)

Notes:

(1) South Carolina and Tennessee are the only two states where practicing naturopathy is illegal.

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[1] <http://www.acsh.org/news/2016/11/16/why-naturopathic-medicine-oxymoron-10441>

[2] [https://file:///Users/gilbertross/Downloads/S2335%20\(1\).pdf](https://file:///Users/gilbertross/Downloads/S2335%20(1).pdf)