



Dear Representative Shanley and Study Commission Members,

After reviewing and evaluating the information discussed in the previous three meetings, the Rhode Island Association of Naturopathic Physicians strongly supports the insurance coverage mandate for Naturopathic Physicians in Rhode Island.

Since licensure of Naturopathic Physicians in 2017, there has been a dramatic increase in interest in our services. However, for many Rhode Island citizens, there has been a financial burden for this type of services as it is currently an out-of-pocket service. This is an accessibility issue and a disservice to the citizens of Rhode Island who cannot afford to pay out of pocket.

Chronic disease such as heart disease and stroke, cancer and diabetes are at an all-time high and are considered the top causes of death in the United States. Currently 6 out of 10 adults in the US have a chronic disease which is costing the healthcare system approximately \$3.8 trillion dollars annually. These chronic diseases lead to a significant burden on the healthcare system by leading to hospitalizations, long term medication use and continued doctors' visits.

Naturopathic doctors use natural therapies including recommendations for nutrition, lifestyle and supplements including herbs, vitamins and minerals. These are all cost saving ways to treat illness compared to surgeries, hospitalizations and medications which is a greater expense to the insurance companies. Naturopathic medicine has a strong focus on prevention and treating the root cause to patients' health concerns and symptoms. We are experts in evidence based and effective natural medicine to treat all types of health conditions. Providing coverage for this service will allow Rhode Islanders to have access and another option for their healthcare team.

There have been numerous studies conducted on cost savings with naturopathic medicine which have been shared for the record previously. Additionally, another study showed that corporate health management programs associated with prevention and wellness demonstrate a 26 percent reduction in health care costs and a \$6 return for every \$1 invested. One study that reviewed the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of integrative medicine estimates that changes in lifestyle and stress reduction – a major focus of naturopathic medicine – could save the US \$10 billion annually in reduced coronary angioplasty procedures and coronary bypass operations alone, and result in an insurance savings of almost \$30,000 per patient. In a country with ever-increasing rates of chronic disease and preventable illnesses, investing in naturopathic medicine is a smart choice.

In addition, naturopathic doctors work closely with primary care providers and other health specialists to discuss the best treatment options for their patients. We focus on being part of the healthcare team and supporting other specialists to enhance patients' overall health. Many medical doctors are grateful for this collaboration as they have many patients seeking this type of healthcare.



Naturopathic medicine is safe, effective, evidence based and a cost savings for insurance.

We urge you to support this mandate to improve the health of all Rhode Islanders and support health equity.

Sincerely

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President of RIANP