

Naturopathic Medical Scope of Practice-Summary

The mission of the Oregon Board of Naturopathic Medicine shall be, within the provisions of the Oregon Revised Statutes and Administrative Rules, to protect and educate the public in the practices of naturopathic medicine. This shall be accomplished through ensuring the competency of licensees in supporting quality education and continuing education for Oregon naturopathic physicians, promoting excellence in every aspect of naturopathic medical practice, and by working to provide naturopathic medical access to all Oregonians.

The OBNM has an ongoing commitment to protect public safety and to foster excellence in the practice of naturopathy. We want to continue to clarify to our profession and to the general public that the scope of practice for naturopathic doctors is growing and becoming an increasingly complex profession with great diversity and range of experience.

The naturopathic medical scope of practice includes, but is not limited too, issues of preserving naturopathic principles, doctor-patient relationships, medical ethics and discipline, unconventional practices, diversity of approach, and standards of naturopathic care. We believe that because our profession continues to grow and evolve so rapidly that we must remember our foundation based on the following fundamental principles of naturopathic medicine.

- Vis Medicatrix Naturae: Work with the Healing Power of Nature
- Primum No Nocere: First Do No Harm
- Tolle Totum: Treat the Whole Person
- Tolle Causam: Identify and Treat the Cause
- Docere: Doctor as Teacher
- Prevention: Prevention as Cure

Unconventional practices are increasing. The Board believes this is an important and complex area of oversight. Unconventional practices include, but are not limited too, naturopathic physicians working in health and grocery stores, pharmacies, laboratories, and home based businesses. Some issues that arise with these varied medical practices are professional and ethical standards, jurisdiction in protection of the patient outside Oregon, definition of a doctor-patient relationship, documentation of patient visits, consultation vs. treatment, and marketing over the internet.

The Board acknowledges the delicate balance of personal preference, choice and diversity of medical approach, and perceptions by the public of consistent, reliable, and effective healthcare. The challenge of regulating this diversity is enormous. We strive to open our lens as wide as possible yet still stay focused.

The standards of care are the professional guidelines for the practice of naturopathic medicine, which include N.D. roles and responsibilities, code of ethics, patient evaluation, practice management, continuing education, and ongoing research among others. Although the terms “*standards of care*,” “*scope of practice*,” and “*standards of practice*” have all been used interchangeably it behooves us to clarify their meanings in relation to naturopathic medical practice.

The board is interested in being proactive. Please share future thoughts and issues with the Board at obnm.info@state.or.us