

## DR. MARIA L. GUSSAK, ND, VNMI

### Roots & Rivers Naturopathic Medical Center

Founder, Naturopathic Doctor & Owner

### Roots & Rivers Foundation

Founder, Naturopathic Doctor, President & Executive Director

### Naturopathic Medicine Institute

VNMI & Board Member

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**SUMMARY** | Dr. Gussak, ND, VNMI is a Naturopathic Physician licensed and insured in Washington State. She graduated from Bastyr University (Seattle, WA) with a Doctorate of Naturopathic and received a dual Bachelor's Degree from Rutgers university (New Brunswick, NJ) in Philosophy and Cell Biology/Neuroscience. She has unique experience with administrative and direct patient care at prominent NJ inpatient hospitals, acute and chronic disease, philosophy and medical education (including being published in a clinical textbook on cardiovascular iatrogenicity during her 2<sup>nd</sup> year of medical school). She is the owner and founder of Roots & Rivers Naturopathic Medical Center and the non-profit, Roots and Rivers Foundation. She serves as a board member with the NMI and Roots and Rivers Foundation.

Her clinical interests include traditional medicine, detox modalities, hydrotherapy, electrotherapy, homeopathic medicine, provider & caregiver burnout, chronic pain, trauma/stress, and chronic systemic infection. She has additional training in Vitalistic Naturopathic Medicine, Environmental Medicine, Bioethics, Morphogenic Field Technique, Ayurveda, Wilderness Medicine, Injection Techniques, and Apitherapy. Her strengths are in humanistic and holistic care, presentation skills, entrepreneurship, and teaching. She aims to preserve traditional natural medicine modalities and physical exam techniques.

**EDUCATION** | **NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE INSTITUTE**  
VITALIST POST-DOCTORATE CERTIFICATE - DECEMBER 2025

Post-doctoral certification for Naturopathic Physicians who have been in practice for a minimum of 3+ years and have complete 50+ hours of additional training. The Vitalist Certification indicates proficiency and understanding of the clinical application of the healing arts and sciences of Vitalistic Naturopathic Medicine.

**BASTYR UNIVERSITY, KENMORE, WA**  
DOCTORATE OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE - JUNE 2020

Completed an accredited program of coursework and over 200 hours of supervised practice in Botanical, Homeopathic, Nutritional, Counseling, Naturopathic Philosophy, and Physical Medicine. Additional Coursework in Reflexology, Tissue Cell Salts, Ayurveda II and III, Organic Gardening, and Advanced Techniques in Physical Medicine. Involved in school clubs including the Bee the Medicine Club (President and Founder from October 2014 – June 2018), Nature Cure Club (1 term), and Carroll Club.

- **Preceptorships and Mentorships:**

- Nazarin Kimiai ND, LaC – Comprehensive Medical Center in Kirkland, WA
- Virender and Shalinder Sodhi ND - Ayurveda and Naturopathic Clinic in Bellevue, WA
- Letitia Dick, ND – Windrose Naturopathic Clinic in Spokane, WA
- Anna Elperin, DO – Awake Heath, a Functional Medicine Primary Care Practice in Ellensburg, WA
- Mentors in Apitherapy: Chris Kleronomos, DAOM, FNP (current president of American Apitherapy Society, Inc. and pain management specialist) and Bradford Weeks, MD (former president of American Apitherapy Society, Inc. and direct pupil of Charles Mraz)
- Professional & Personal Mentorship from Karen Knops, MD (Hospice and Palliative Care Physician) and Lesly Fein, MD (Lyme Literate Rheumatologist in Caldwell, NJ)

**RUTGERS UNIVERSITY - LIVINGSTON COLLEGE, NEW BRUNSWICK, NJ**  
 BACHELOR OF ARTS AND SCIENCES - JANUARY 2011

- Double Major: Cell Biology/Neuroscience and Philosophy
- Dean's List: Fall 2009, Spring 2010, Fall 2010
- 149.5 Degree Credits, GPA: 3.4

**RELATED  
 EXPERIENCE**

**NATUROPATHIC PHYSICIAN, PRESIDENT & FOUNDER, ROOTS AND RIVERS FOUNDATION**  
 FEBRUARY 2024 - CURRENT

- Roots and Rivers 501c3 is a non-profit charitable organization with the mission of building public philanthropic support for the Roots & Rivers Naturopathic Medical Center and its affiliated activities. We also strive to further the theory and practice of traditional naturopathic medicine of the vitalist style for current and future generations in order to preserve the purpose of medicine, namely, to help and at least do no harm.
- Purpose & Mission: We support R|R to generously provide time, education, and naturopathic medical services to those affected by financial and/or life circumstantial hardships.
- Vision: Our vision is to be a future naturopathic hospital in the heart of Washington state (Wenatchee, WA) which may serve as a "clinical Center of Excellence that demonstrate the effectiveness of naturopathic medicine " as dreamed by our naturopathic physician organization, The Naturopathic Medicine Institute.

**PHYSICIAN & MEDICAL DIRECTOR, ROOTS & RIVERS NATUROPATHIC MEDICAL CENTER**  
 OCTOBER 2020 – CURRENT

- Environmental Medicine Practice in East Wenatchee, WA
- Telemedicine and House Call based family practice

**OWNER & CONSULTANT, DR. MARIA L. GUSSAK ND, PLLC**  
 JANUARY 2015 - CURRENT

- Established BeeTheMedicine.com and company providing apitherapy to clients by teaching them to self-administer Live Bee Venom Therapy. The ultimate goal is to maintain the Charles Mraz practice for making and providing injectable bee venom to medical providers.
- Managed and Created the following websites: MariaGussak.com, IhorGussakConsulting.com, Iatrogenicity.org, BeeTheMedicine.org
- Acted as editor and medical writer for projects of Ihor Gussak MD, PhD and his Cardiology colleagues.
- Served as a Consultant for *Cardiobility, Inc.* (January 2015-Feb 2019) by drafting the company webpage, designing business cards for their executives, and recording voice prompts onto an app for patients using their patented medical device for 12-lead ECGs on a smartphone.
- Served as consultant for *Project Sanitas*, an ongoing Project with Dr. Charles Cropley with the goal of rebuilding Kellogg's historical in-patient clinic, integrating modern technologies in Boulder, Colorado at the base of Mount Sanitas. Project has been discontinued.
- Organizing the Gussak Foundation for the Study of Iatrogenicity as clinical discipline with the aim of reducing unnecessary suffering by re-framing medical study in terms of the natural science of healing.

**STUDENT LIAISON REPRESENTATIVE, STANDARD PROCESS NW, INC.**  
AUGUST 2017 – CURRENT

**LIBRARY AIDE, BASTYR UNIVERSITY**  
JUNE 2015-MAY 2016

**TUTOR (PHYSIOLOGY), RUTGERS UNIVERSITY**  
SEPTEMBER 2012 – DECEMBER 2012

**PATIENT LIAISON, CUSTOMER SATISFACTION DEPARTMENT**  
MORRISTOWN MEDICAL CENTER, NJ  
NOVEMBER 2012 – APRIL 2014

- Served as key liaison to all departments and units at Inpatient Hospital (500+ beds). Enhanced the knowledge of customer satisfaction, importance of HCAHPS, and provided HCAHPS and Press Ganey education among hospital staff including Nurses, Managers, and Nursing Assistants to improve the patient experience thus increasing hospital reimbursements through the Medicare incentive program as placed by the Affordable Care Act.
- Analyzed HCAHPS and Press Ganey data for trends at the hospital, unit, and department level. Quarterly Magnet reports maintained and distributed via website. Identify areas of opportunity to increase metrics. Support improvement projects. Update dashboards and scorecards in effort to increase Medicare reimbursement incentives.
- Professional, outgoing demeanor required to troubleshoot issues with dissatisfied patients and families in the hospital as an Inpatient Patient Liaison. Executive concierge and VIP researcher and liaison. Perform Service Recovery and Employee Reward and Recognition. Troubleshoot issues with dissatisfied patients and families working in concert with Bed Management.
- Skills required: customer service, strong interpersonal communication, organization, prior hospital and patient care experience used, college degree required, flexibility, team player, statistical analysis, presentation and public speaking, Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint.
- Chair of service excellence committees: Patient Liaison Meeting (Chair), Customer Satisfaction Committee (recorder), Schwartz Center Rounds (co-planner), Physician Satisfaction, Pediatric Customer Satisfaction, Stewardship Committee, Ambulatory Surgery Action Committee, Diversity Council, LGBT Committee, Wayfinding Committee, and Steering Committee for HCAHPS Domain Responsiveness of Hospital Staff (Chair).
- Organization Development Training: Assertion Skills, Active Listening Skills, Conflict Management, Communicating with Clarity, Creative Problem Solving.

**EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PATIENT CARE TECHNICIAN**  
MORRISTOWN MEDICAL CENTER, NJ  
DECEMBER 2009 – NOVEMBER 2012

- Performed phlebotomy, 12-lead ECGs, obtained vital signs, stocked and cleaned supplies, maximized efficiency and ED flow, addressed basic patient needs and questions, collected specimens, ran lab tests (Glucometer, I-STAT, Urine Analysis), applied wound dressing, splinting, peri-care and hygiene, transport, performed basic patient care and aid in Nursing tasks under RN supervision
- Was the first ED technician historically asked to serve on Professional Practice Committee (February 2012) and wrote Ethics training into Technician Training Competency Format.
- Received additional recognition as Emergency Department Employee of the Month (September 2012) and 2 ACE awards (September 2011 and February 2010) amongst a staff of over 500.
- Performed and received training in Additional Educator Duties including Ambulation Aide, EKG, Point of Care (Glucometer, I-STAT), precepting new technicians, SoftID SuperUser, PICIS SuperUser
- Obtained Additional Training including:
  - CPR Certified – American Heart Association
  - New Jersey EMT-B Certification (expired 6/30/2017)
  - Hazmat Operations and Decontamination Special Team (expired 9/2013)
  - IS-100, IS-200, IS-700, Hazmat Awareness, PEPP, PHTLS, Core13
  - Train the Trainer – Ambulation Aide Instructor
  - Nursing Assistant Training on Care of the Elderly (completed 9/2011)

## CERTIFICATES & TRAINING

**VNMI – Vitalist Certification – Naturopathic Medicine Institute** - December 2025  
**Matrix Reflex Testing (MRT)** (ongoing training)– a version of Autonomic Response Testing as taught by Dr. Louisa Williams  
**European Injection Techniques** – Redmond, WA - September 2019. Segmental Injections, Trigger Point Injections, Detox Support (off label use of glutathione, homeopathic injectables, ozone), Mesotherapy with platelet rich plasma, prolotherapy, in conjunction with ART (Autonomic Response Testing) taught by Dietrich Klinghardt, MD, PhD.  
**Advanced Hydrotherapy**, Carroll Institute, Spokane, WA – April 2019  
- Teacher’s Assistant for April 2020 course in Spokane, WA  
**CPR certified** – expires December 2021  
**Morphogenic Field Technique**, Standard Process NW, Redmond, WA – August 2018  
**Charles Mraz Apitherapy Course & Conference**, Redondo Beach, CA – October 2016  
**Dr. O.G. Carroll Food Intolerance Method**, Carroll Institute, Spokane WA – August 2016  
**Certificate International CME Program**, Jerusalem, Israel, “Living Long, Living Well – Mind, Body, Spirit” – October 2012  
**Basic Pranic Healer**, Center for Pranic Healing, Lyndhurst, NJ – September 2012  
**Intensive Bioethics Course**, Georgetown Kennedy Institute of Bioethics, Washington D.C. – June 2012  
**Wilderness EMT module for Medical Professionals**, SOLO Southeast School for Wilderness Medicine at Nantahala Outdoor Center, Bryson City, NC – October 2011  
**EMT-B Certification**, New Jersey – January 2009 (expired June 30, 2017)  
**Intensive Estonian Language Tartu University**, Tartu, Estonia, 2-semester language immersion – September 2003 – May 2004

## PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

**Author**, 2016 - *Chapter 1: Iatrogenicity: Definition, History, and Modern Context* by Gussak, M. Gussak, I. and Kostis, J. *Iatrogenicity: Causes and Consequences of Iatrogenesis in Cardiovascular Medicine* Rutgers University Press. New Brunswick, NJ. 2017. (unpublished)  
**Presentation**, 8/9/2018, **University of Washington – Center for Urban Horticulture, Seattle, WA** – Guest Lecturer: *Medicine from the Hive including Bee Venom Therapy*  
**Presentation**, 2/15/2017, **Bastyr University, WA** – Lunch n’ Learn summary of 2016 Charles Mraz Apitherapy Course & Conference  
**Presentation**, 7/26/2012, **Morristown Medical Center, NJ** - *Virtue Ethics* Bioethics Committee at Morristown Medical Center  
**Presentation**, 6/1/2012, **Morristown Medical Center, NJ** – *The Difficult Patient* Schwartz Center Rounds at Morristown Medical Center  
**Presentation**, 2/1/2013, **Morristown Medical Center, NJ** – *Stress and HCAHPS* Schwartz Center Rounds at Morristown Medical Center

## ASSOCIATIONS & MEMBERSHIPS

**Naturopathic Medicine Institute (NMI)** (Board Member since March 2026)  
**Naturopathic Medicine Institute (NMI)** (student member since February 2017)  
**American Academy of Environmental Medicine (AAEM)** (member since February 2020)  
**NAEM, National Association of Environmental Medicine** (student member since July 2019)  
**Informed Choice WA** (member since May 2017)  
**Physicians for Informed Consent.org** (member since May 2017)  
**INHS, International Natural Hygiene Society** (member since June 2016)  
**NAPCP, Naturopathic Academy of Primary Care Physicians** (student member since April 2016)  
**NMSA, Naturopathic Medicine Student Association** (member and below affiliations since July 2015)  
**WANP, Washington Association of Naturopathic Physicians**  
**AANP, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians**  
**NWNP, Northwest Naturopathic Physicians**  
**Morristown Medical Center Bioethics Committee** (member and presenter April 2011 – April 2014)  
**Schwartz Center Rounds**, for Compassionate and Humanistic HealthCare, Morristown Medical Center (March 2012 – April 2014)  
**Appalachian Mountain Club** (September 2011 – April 2014)  
**Volunteer EMT, Morris Minutemen** – Morris Township, NJ (August 2008 – December 2009)

## INTERESTS

Vitalism, Hydrotherapy, Wilderness Medicine, Bioethics, Natural Laws of Medicine and Physiology, Iatrogenicity, Immune and Lymph health, Neurodegenerative Disease, Lyme Disease and vector-borne infections, Multiple Systemic Infection Syndromes, Natural Hygiene, Health Spa and Sanitarium, Nature Cure, Pilates, History & Art in Medicine, Philosophy, Environmental Medicine, Prolotherapy, Low Dose Immunotherapy, Applied Kinesiology/Morphogenic Field Technique/Muscle Testing. Establishing an Inpatient Naturopathic Hospital in Nature. Apitherapy & Beekeeping.

## WEBINARS & SPEAKING

Vital Conversation Panel Speaker – Naturopathic Medicine Institute – 2025, ongoing

Apitherapy Speaker Series:

- Iatrogenicity and Bee Venom
- Histamine and Bee Venom

Biotherapy Live!

- The video of your presentation is available on the BTER Foundation's Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/bterfoundation>) and YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/BTERFoundation>), and the direct link to the video is here: <https://youtu.be/0zW0uDljfjU>.