



American Naturopathic Association
The oldest and original Naturopathic organization since 1919
1930 18th St. NW, Ste B2, #2461, Washington DC 20009 USA

▣ POSITION PAPER ▣

LICENSURE

Our founder Benedict Lust had as his wish “licensure for naturopaths in all states.”

Naturopathic doctors tend to generally fit in the Libertarian mold: highly individualistic, supportive of individual freedom, suspicious of large institutions of authority, and a bit disdainful of the mainstream medical paradigm that tells them “You can’t do that.” Traditional NDs are so individualistic, in fact, that they rarely duplicate each other. Some use nutritional counseling as their only tool while another primarily uses acupuncture. Another uses manual therapies while still another prescribes homeopathic medicines but does not do any hands-on therapy. Still another uses botanical medicines but no homeopathic remedies. They are all naturopaths; their focus in treatment differs. They all subscribe to the tenets of Naturopathy and follow the same principles in helping people heal, even if the methods they use differ.

Creating a unified force out of such people is difficult, as naturopathic history has proven. But a different type of naturopath emerged through the years that is strongly organized: the pseudo-medical naturopath, or as they prefer to call themselves, “naturopathic physicians”. These people come from a collectivist background; they psychologically need the validation and support of a group—the larger the group, the better. This is why they have a mania for scientific validation, why they brag that their schools must be “accredited”, why they publish papers saying something “looks promising” or “may be of value” (the obligatory caution observed in medical papers), and then give thirty citations confirming that it *may* be of value. They love the trappings of academia and their elite status in the natural medicine world.

Traditional naturopaths, by contrast, aren’t afraid to say, “I used this on fifty different patients, and it worked really well.” They are usually innovators, which is how we got Naturopathy in the first place.

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Naturally, many traditional NDs feel—and rightly so—that licensing laws only serve to protect “turf” and are just another way a corrupt state maintains control and appropriates money. A free market generally sorts out whose business thrives and whose fails. But the pseudo-medical naturopaths have been dead set on not only nationwide licensure and approval by the State, but on *barring* traditional NDs from practice in any state. They want no competition at all.

Since they have been mostly successful in this strategy, even the most hardened individualist among us must admit that while we were pursuing a calling to practice Naturopathy in spite of mainstream medical criticism, we face the greatest threat from within our own profession. Because we did not want to play politics, someone else entered and did it. **The end result is that we have sixteen states in which we are not allowed to practice.** This came about not because of MDs but because of NDs.

We can no longer take the attitude “Everybody free to do his own thing” and “The State should stay out of my business”. If traditional naturopaths do not unite and fight for their right to exist, we will see the end of true Naturopathy. For that reason, the American Naturopathic Association supports licensure efforts because unless we do, any more bills passed will make us criminals under the law.