



## American Naturopathic Association

The oldest and original Naturopathic organization since 1919

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### □ POSITION PAPER □

#### **OFFICE DISPENSING**

Naturopathic doctors who make extensive use of botanical medicines have historically dispensed out of their offices, and in fact have often compounded herbal combinations for their patients in the tradition of the most effective herbalists. This is not done with an eye to profit, as the doctor does not have the luxury of writing an herbal prescription and sending the person to the corner drugstore to have it filled. The patient is fortunate to have even one such place where an individualized remedy can be found.

Naturopathic doctors who are also homeopaths typically dispense remedies in the office because, unlike some places such as France, there is not a homeopathic pharmacy on every city block. The patient also benefits because the cost will be lower than at a pharmacy.

Naturopathic doctors who use vitamin supplements are forced to stock them in the office if they want quality products because the supplement industry prevents most natural vitamins from being available in a retail setting. The few makers of real vitamins sell only to professionals because they are forced out of the marketplace. It is not out of greed that the ND offers such products to sick people; to the contrary, it costs the naturopath money to stock such items.

In the age of nutraceuticals, a hybrid product composed of herbal, mineral, vitamin, and other substances, many naturopaths utilize a third party clearing house that stocks the items and will ship directly to the doctor's patient. While it relieves the doctor of the monetary burden of maintaining a full in-house pharmacy, it also limits them to only the product lines the company decides. Many naturopathic doctors find that they can do a better job by stocking the products that have proven their value in practice.

Because of these factors, we do not consider in-house dispensing by our naturopathic doctors to be against ethical standards.