



Naturopathic Doctors – 10 Years as a Regulated Profession

July marks ten years since the regulation of the naturopathic profession in Alberta under Alberta's *Health Professions Act*; in doing so, Alberta became the fifth province to regulate the practice of naturopathic medicine.

Given this landmark anniversary, we wanted to take a moment to reflect on the vital role naturopathic doctors play in the health care ecosystem as part of the province's health care team. Naturopathic medicine is well integrated into the Alberta system and naturopathic doctors work very closely with colleagues across the health care system to compliment the good work that goes on every day to ensure Albertans get the best care possible. The naturopathic profession has grown exponentially in the last decade as more people seek out naturopathic medicine to maintain or improve their overall health and well-being.

The work of Naturopathic doctors (NDs) supports the wellness and mental health for all ages from acute to chronic and physical to psychological. Naturopathic doctors are at work in communities across the province making a meaningful difference in improving health care for Albertans. NDs work alongside other health care professionals to achieve quality patient care through engagement, collaboration, and naturopathic doctor leadership.

Naturopathic doctors blend the healing power of nature with modern, scientific knowledge to offer an alternative perspective on safe and effective ways to restore health. NDs work with patients to identify the root causes of disease and to address all the factors affecting their health. Addressing a variety of health concerns, naturopathic medicine can ease symptoms and help to reduce the use of prescription medications, making it a valuable complement to conventional treatments. The scope of naturopathic medicine includes botanical medicine, clinical nutrition, traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, lifestyle counselling, disease prevention and general health promotion.

We at the Alberta Association of Naturopathic Doctors (AAND), support the empowerment of Albertans to seek out additional care and utilize the training and skills of all healthcare practitioners, including naturopathic doctors, and be confident that the services provided are integrated with other providers that comprise their health care team.

Today, more people are seeking out naturopathic care and the number of naturopathic doctors is growing at record rates to accommodate this increased demand. Currently there are naturopathic doctors practicing across Alberta, and Canada - in every province in all but one territory.

NDs take pride in the value naturopathic medicine offers Albertans. It has a positive impact on their well being and mental health. As the system faces a number of challenges, including access, colleagues across the province are happy to provide an access point to be a part of patient's continuum of care as they move through the system; with each provider being a critical piece of a patients health care journey.

Alberta's naturopathic doctors are proud to be part of the health care system in Alberta and will continue to work to support health and wellness of Albertans. In turn, Albertans can have confidence that naturopathic doctors have the education, competencies and skills and oversight to perform naturopathic services.

Since 2018, AAND has supported these professionals by promoting excellence for the profession of Naturopathic Medicine in Alberta. To learn more, please visit: <https://albertanaturopaths.org/>