

# STAND UP FOR PATIENT SAFETY: VOTE NO ON SB 100

The Montana Medical Association asks legislators to reject SB 100, a bill that jeopardizes patient safety and blurs the lines between conventional care provided by physicians and alternative, natural therapeutic care by naturopaths.



## Expansive Scope Change for Naturopaths

**SB 100, aimed at allowing naturopaths to prescribe conventional medications, removes language that clarifies the profession's scope to include only naturopathic therapies. SB 100 equates to allowing naturopaths to perform conventional medical therapies, without additional education and training, putting patients at risk.**

## BACKGROUND

**Naturopathic medicine is alternative medicine.** Currently, 22 states and the District of Columbia have licensing or registration laws for naturopaths. 34 states do not grant any prescription rights. Naturopathy is not conventional medicine and not recognized by federal entities like Medicare.

**Conventional medicine is practiced by Allopathic (MD) and Osteopathic (DO) physicians** after attending post-graduate medical education based on using scientific principles. MDs and DOs complete 12,000 -16,000 hours of patient care training and must complete a residency program that ranges between 3 to 7 years. This includes intensive pharmacological training.

By contrast, naturopaths complete a post-graduate education with an emphasis on the self-healing process via wellness and natural therapy remedies. They receive approximately 720-1,200 hours of patient care training and are not required to complete a residency program.

	Length of graduate-level education	Years of residency/fellowship training	Total patient care hours required through training
Physician (MD or DO)	4 years (90 credit hours)	3-7 years	12,000 - 16,000 hours
Naturopath	4 years	Optional, not required	720-1,200 hours.

# LEGISLATIVE ASK:

## WHY A NO VOTE ON SB 100 MATTERS

- Naturopaths do not have the extensive education and training needed to appropriately manage patients with complex conditions through the use of habit-forming, conventional medications.
- SB 100 goes beyond the allowance of conventional medications to include all conventional therapies; the testimony provided indicated intent to only impact medications. As written, SB 100 therapies.
- Naturopaths are not trained in conventional medicine, their specialty is natural medicine. Conventional therapies, such as for pain management, are not taught. Conventional drugs and the natural substances now used by naturopaths can interact, creating a medical situation best handled by a physician who practices conventional medicine and has conventional clinical experience. **When providers, such as naturopaths, do not have that same level of background, patient safety will be jeopardized.**
- **States do not give naturopaths unrestricted prescribing rights, recognizing it as unnecessary based on the use of natural substances and medications.** Where limited prescriptive rights are allowed, sideboards on types of medications like controlled substances are in place, or requirements of collaboration with a physician.
- Granting naturopaths unlimited prescribing rights for dangerous drugs is unprecedented in Montana. Montana law includes sideboards for non-physicians, limitations on controlled substances, or physician supervision requirements.
- SB 100 would allow naturopaths to **potentially prescribe hundreds of additional conventional medications**, a departure from dispensing a natural substance, drug, or devices without the necessary training and education.
- **A naturopath's educational emphasis on the self-healing process lends itself to natural medications and therapies, and not to conventional medications and therapies, where additional critical education and training is needed to properly manage patient care, and accurately prescribe potentially dangerous prescription drugs with full understanding of possible interactions.**



### Education Matters

A physician attains 3-7 years of residency/fellowship training, not required for naturopaths to attain. Additionally, physicians receive 10x more patient care hours.



### Protect Patient Safety

The extensive training undergone by physicians creates a critical foundation of medical knowledge and experience, which protects patient safety.




### Scope Expansion

This expansion of naturopath scope of practice in the absence of additional training in conventional medicine places patients at risk

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