



Incorporated in 1955, the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors (CAND) is a not-for profit national association representing regulated (or in unregulated jurisdictions, those who meet the criteria for regulation) Naturopathic Doctors (NDs) across Canada. Membership with the CAND is voluntary. Currently the CAND represents 85% of the 2,700 NDs practicing in Canada.

**CAND is reaching out to all candidates to inform our membership of over 2,400 Canadian naturopathic doctors and naturopathic medical students how election commitments and policy priorities may affect naturopathic medicine.**

Canada's naturopathic doctors are primary care providers and experts in natural medicine. Naturopathic doctors (NDs) focus on health promotion and disease prevention by treating the whole person, looking at the overall health of a patient rather than solely addressing symptoms.

The philosophy of naturopathic medicine includes stimulating the healing power of the body and treating the underlying or root cause of disease.

(NDs) integrate standard medical diagnostics such as blood work with a broad range of therapies including diet and lifestyle changes, botanical medicine, clinical nutrition, physical medicine, Traditional Chinese Medicine/acupuncture and intravenous therapy. In some instances, NDs may incorporate pharmaceutical drugs such as antibiotics into their treatment regimen.

## Appropriate Prescribing Authorities

An ND's duty is like that of general medical practitioners: ensure individualized, patient-centered primary care to diagnose and treat illness. However, unlike general practitioners, NDs face a significant barrier to providing timely, effective care – the ability to access federally controlled drugs. Currently, British Columbia and Ontario have granted prescribing authority to NDs and more provinces are expected to follow suit. While NDs in those provinces can now prescribe prescription medication there is a significant exception in that they do not have access to controlled substances under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (CDSA)*.

This limits an ND's ability to provide the care needed to patients dealing with a variety of health issues. For example, naturopathic doctors with prescribing authority can treat hormone imbalances by prescribing estrogen and progesterone but not testosterone because of its CDSA status. In addition, for decades patients have been seeking support from naturopathic doctors to overcome prescription drug addictions and/or to take a natural non opioid approach to pain management. A significant barrier continues to limit a naturopathic doctor's ability to fully help these patients and can invite complications to the recovery process. Weaning a patient off a controlled substance requires a thoroughly holistic approach. Specifically, it requires the ability, over time, to reduce the patient's dose of the controlled drug. Co-ordination with a medical doctor's schedule puts the patient in a difficult position and often does not allow for the patients to receive the lower dose prescriptions that are required in the timeframes needed for the ND to support the weaning off process, impacting a patient's ability to achieve optimal outcomes.

**Will you support removing the barrier that prevents provinces and territories from choosing to allow naturopathic doctors to prescribe, authorize and administer selected drugs containing legally controlled substances to ensure the optimal treatment of patients?**

## Authorizing Cannabis for Medical Use

Now that cannabis is legally available, Canadians unable to access an MD or nurse practitioner for medicinal cannabis are turning to the recreational market to meet their needs. This is because of a regulatory contradiction that excludes NDs from the list of health care providers that can authorize cannabis but permits NDs to prescribe a drug containing cannabis for medical purposes. The CAND is concerned about the potential for inappropriate use, dose and/or adverse reaction. Aligning the regulatory definitions will ensure patients benefit from advice and guidance from knowledgeable health care professionals, provide increased and more appropriate access options and, will result in better health outcome for these patients.

Will you support amending regulations to ensure naturopathic doctors are able to authorize cannabis for medical purposes?

## Support for Veterans

Naturopathic doctors are often actively sought by veterans for mental and emotional care as well as pain management with non-pharmacologic therapies to help them face health problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, sleep disturbances, opioid dependencies and chronic pain. Because naturopathic care is not normally an insured health service option available to veterans, they shoulder the costs associated with naturopathic treatment. To ensure our veterans are receiving the support they need, particularly with regards to their mental health, care by qualified NDs should be included as an option in the spectrum of health care services made available to Canadian veterans.

Will you help ensure that care by qualified naturopathic doctors is an option in the spectrum of insured health care services made available to Canadian veterans?

## Support for Indigenous Health

To improve health outcomes for Canada's Indigenous populations, there needs to be an increase in availability of culturally appropriate care, including naturopathic medicine. Naturopathic medicine shares many of the same philosophies and approaches to health as traditional healers: treating the whole person; understanding the connection between body, mind and spirit; the use of plant, animal and mineral based medicines; and, the use of knowledge and experience handed down from generation to generation to diagnose, and treat various health concerns. Many Indigenous people want to access naturopathic care and have called on the federal government to amend the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program to provide for naturopathic services.

Will you help make care by qualified naturopathic doctors an option on the spectrum of insured health care services made available to Canada's Indigenous people under the Non-Insured Health Benefits program?