



---

## PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY PROFILE

Endorsed by the Board of the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP). The AANP represents all licensed and licensable naturopathic physicians who have graduated from CNME-accredited programs and passed all relevant naturopathic physicians' licensing examinations (NPLEX) administered by the North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners (NABNE).

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW	3
NATUROPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGES PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY PROFILE	4
Introduction to the Profile	4
Naturopathic Medicine Philosophy and Mandate	4
NATUROPATHIC MEDICAL EXPERT	6
NATUROPATHIC MANAGER	8
NATUROPATHIC PROFESSIONAL	9
NATUROPATHIC HEALTH SCHOLAR	10
NATUROPATHIC HEALTH ADVOCATE	12
APPENDIX “A”: NATUROPATHIC DOCTOR’S OATH	13
BIBLIOGRAPHY	14

The professional competency profile is organized around five key roles –

### **Naturopathic Medical Expert**

- *Integrate naturopathic philosophy, theory and principles with naturopathic medical knowledge in the care of patients and case management including the assessment, diagnostic and treatment phases.*
- *Develop, maintain and value a comprehensive knowledge base in naturopathic medicine.*
- *Conduct an assessment to formulate a naturopathic medical diagnosis.*
- *Effectively provide and manage patient care.*

### **Naturopathic Manager**

- *Develop and maintain relationships in practice and the community consistent with the philosophy and principles of naturopathic medicine.*
- *Establish, develop and manage a practice.*
- *Exhibit strong personal management skills.*

### **Naturopathic Professional**

- *Utilize knowledge of naturopathic history, principles and philosophy to guide professional engagement and development.*
- *Demonstrate ethics and integrity in professional practice and personal conduct.*
- *Serve the public through ethical practice, health promotion and disease prevention.*
- *Ensure professional competence through ongoing self-assessment and professional development.*

### **Naturopathic Health Scholar**

- *Exemplify the principle of doctor as teacher in every patient and public interaction.*
- *Maintain and enhance professional competence through ongoing learning activities.*
- *Critically evaluate medical information.*
- *Educate patients, colleagues, other health-care providers and the public.*
- *Advance the practice of naturopathic medicine through the development, critical assessment and dissemination of research and information.*

### **Naturopathic Health Advocate**

- *Promote the principles and philosophy of naturopathic medicine in advocating for sustainable, healthy environments and lifestyles for patients and society.*
- *Reflect a knowledge base that enables effective health advocacy.*
- *Influence others in accepting naturopathic medicine as an essential element in health promotion and disease prevention.*

# NATUROPATHIC MEDICAL COLLEGES PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCY PROFILE

## **Introduction to the Profile**

Naturopathic medicine is growing in stature, prevalence and acceptance throughout North America. The institutions and organizations associated with naturopathic medicine are becoming more numerous, diverse and professional. This growing complexity has highlighted the need for an agreed-upon description of what a naturopathic doctor knows, believes and is trained to perform. In 2005 the Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges (AANMC) Board established a structure for member institutions to work together in developing a competency profile that will clearly communicate the roles that a naturopathic doctor can perform, and that will underpin the development of common competency-based curriculum elements. The Council of Chief Academic and Clinic Officers (CCACO) was asked to lead the process of soliciting the views of leaders throughout the profession in building this profile. Valuable input was received from the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP), Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors (CAND), Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME), North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners (NABNE) and members of the Foundations of Naturopathic Medicine project. This work culminated in the Naturopathic Doctor Professional Competency Profile; a document that we hope will serve as a foundation for naturopathic medical licensure, education and practice.

The profile is organized around five key roles - medical expert, manager, professional, health scholar and health advocate - that collectively define the essential abilities of a naturopathic doctor. Within each role is a brief description followed by broad statements of competency. The roles are not mutually exclusive; rather, they influence and overlap one another.

## **Naturopathic Medicine Philosophy and Mandate**

Naturopathic medicine is a distinct, integrated system of general healthcare practiced by naturopathic doctors who have graduated from a Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME)-accredited college. Naturopathic medicine is the philosophy and practice of the art and science of medicine that honors the integrity of the whole person by addressing body, mind and spirit. The naturopathic doctor facilitates the healing process through the most supportive and least invasive methods to maximize the person's innate ability to achieve and maintain optimal health. Naturopathic medicine utilizes traditional and conventional medical sciences for the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of human disorders with an emphasis on the therapeutic use of natural methods and materials.

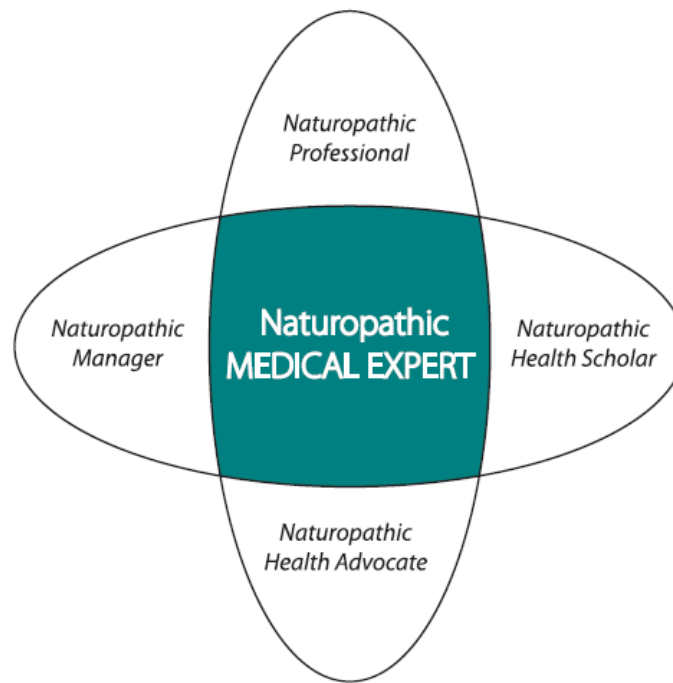
Naturopathic doctors are united by a practice philosophy that centers around core principles developed through historical and modern methods of studying health and disease. These principles are the cornerstone of the naturopathic doctor's approach to the patient and their application provides for individualized care.

These core principles are:

- *First, do no harm.*
- *Co-operate with the healing powers of nature.*
- *Address the fundamental causes of disease.*
- *Heal the whole person through individualized treatment.*
- *Teach the principles of healthy living and preventive medicine.*

In conjunction with standard medical diagnostics and treatment, naturopathic doctors apply these principles universally in their professional careers, as well as in the evaluation and management of medical conditions that cross a patient's lifespan. With disease prevention and health promotion as a primary goal, naturopathic medicine offers safe, effective and cost-efficient options for individual and population health concerns. Naturopathic doctors collaborate with other health-care providers to optimize patient health.

Naturopathic medical education consists of a four-year post-baccalaureate professional program that incorporates naturopathic philosophy, biomedical sciences, clinical sciences, and supervised patient care. These elements are represented in the competencies that follow. A primary goal of naturopathic medical education is to train practitioners to fully integrate the philosophy of naturopathic medicine into their practice. Embedded within each of the following roles are competencies reflecting naturopathic philosophy.



## NATUROPATHIC MEDICAL EXPERT

Naturopathic medical expert is the primary role of the naturopathic doctor. This role integrates with the roles and competencies of manager, professional, health scholar and health advocate. Through their knowledge and clinical acumen, naturopathic doctors conduct a thorough medical history and recommend, administer and interpret appropriate diagnostic examinations and procedures to establish a comprehensive assessment. This assessment is interpreted through the application of naturopathic philosophy and biomedical insight to formulate a diagnosis. Naturopathic doctors have the knowledge and skills to recommend or apply individualized treatment using naturopathic therapeutic modalities. Treatment options are informed by naturopathic philosophy, principles and clinical theory, and are applied in a safe, legal, ethical and efficacious manner. Naturopathic doctors function with an awareness of the limits of their expertise and in respect of their patient's desires.

### **Professional Competencies:**

*The naturopathic doctor will:*

- 1. Integrate naturopathic philosophy, theory and principles with naturopathic medical knowledge in the care of patients and case management including the assessment, diagnostic and treatment phases.**
  - Evaluate and integrate biomedical, clinical arts and science knowledge in the context of naturopathic principles and philosophy in clinical practice.
  - Formulate naturopathic medical diagnoses and treatment plans consistent with naturopathic philosophy and principles.
  - Utilize naturopathic clinical theories in case analysis and the development of treatment plans.
  
- 2. Develop, maintain and value a comprehensive knowledge base in naturopathic medicine.**
  - Demonstrate knowledge of the history and philosophy of naturopathic medicine.
  - Demonstrate knowledge of biomedical and clinical arts and sciences essential to the practice of naturopathic medicine.
  - Demonstrate knowledge of the theory and practice of therapeutics including but not limited to botanical medicine, homeopathic medicine, physical medicine, clinical nutrition, naturopathic counseling/health psychology, nature cure, traditional healing arts and pharmacology.
  - Continuously update knowledge base through relevant research and education.

### **3. Conduct an assessment to formulate a naturopathic medical diagnosis.**

- Gather information necessary to formulate a naturopathic medical diagnosis.
- Communicate effectively with patients and, when appropriate, their families and significant others.
- Incorporate knowledge of the determinants of health into assessment and diagnosis.
- Formulate an accurate diagnosis based on medical history, physical examination and diagnostic testing.

### **4. Effectively provide and manage patient care.**

- Compassionately, ethically and safely provide patients with naturopathic medical care.
- Effectively utilize naturopathic therapeutics, which include but are not limited to botanical medicine, homeopathic medicine, physical medicine, clinical nutrition, naturopathic counseling/health psychology, nature cure, traditional healing arts and pharmacology\* as they relate to patient care and case management.
- Identify and assess the actions and interactions of pharmacological, botanicals, nutritional supplements, and other agents.
- Create, implement, monitor and revise effective individualized patient treatment plans.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the knowledge base of other health-care professionals and their areas of expertise.
- Collaborate with other health-care practitioners through medical consultations and referrals.
- Consistently integrate preventive healthcare into case management.
- Engage patients in establishing a long-term focus for their personal health management.
- Manage patient care in a manner that respects doctor/patient roles and responsibilities

---

\* Naturopathic doctors prescribe pharmaceuticals in a number of North American jurisdictions.

## NATUROPATHIC MANAGER

As managers, naturopathic doctors establish priorities, execute tasks, allocate resources and understand business principles as they pertain to medical practice. They manage patient care and maintain patient relationships in accordance with naturopathic philosophy and principles. While their individual practice activities may vary, as managers, naturopathic doctors are responsible for quality assurance, budgeting, administration, marketing, organizational tasks and policy decisions. As integral members of health-care teams, naturopathic doctors work collaboratively with colleagues and staff in clinical settings, as well as communicate effectively with other health-care providers.

### **Professional Competencies:**

*The naturopathic doctor will:*

- 1. Develop and maintain relationships in practice and the community consistent with the philosophy and principles of naturopathic medicine.**
  - Collaborate with others to support health promotion and disease prevention.
  - Utilize community resources in professional practice.
- 2. Establish, develop and manage their practice.**
  - Consistently practice in a compassionate, ethical and legal manner.
  - Create short and long-term plans appropriate to practice needs.
  - Organize systems, procedures, staffing and resources relevant to practice and consistent with plans.
  - Lead others in managing patient care and practice activities.
  - Monitor and revise practice activities for the health of their patients, their practice and themselves.
- 3. Exhibit strong personal management skills.**
  - Demonstrate a commitment to personal growth and development.
  - Manage time, both personally and professionally.
  - Determine, establish and maintain a personal life balance.

## NATUROPATHIC PROFESSIONAL

As professionals, naturopathic doctors demonstrate a commitment to competence, integrity, ethics and the promotion of public good. Service to their profession and society is delivered in accordance with the philosophy and principles of naturopathic medicine, and in congruence with the naturopathic oath. They are committed to the advancement of the profession, and respect the statutes and regulations within the jurisdictions in which they practice. Naturopathic doctors recognize the need to exemplify the principles of naturopathic medicine both personally and in their roles as health-care professionals and leaders in their communities.

### **Professional Competencies:**

*The naturopathic doctor will:*

- 1. Utilize knowledge of naturopathic history, principles and philosophy to guide their professional engagement and development.**
  - Participate in the advancement of the naturopathic profession.
  - Critically evaluate and integrate the principles of naturopathic medicine as a doctor and community leader.
- 2. Demonstrate ethics and integrity in professional practice and personal conduct.**
  - Conduct their life and practice with vigilance, integrity and freedom from prejudice.
  - Respect the laws and regulations in the jurisdiction of practice.
  - Abide by the naturopathic oath (see Appendix "A").
- 3. Serve the public through ethical practice, health promotion and disease prevention.**
  - Demonstrate accountability for clinical and patient management decisions including potential consequences and outcomes.
  - Place the protection of the public ahead of self-interest.
  - Promote health in the community through education and public service.
- 4. Ensure professional competence through ongoing self-assessment and professional development.**
  - Continually improve their abilities as a naturopathic doctor through self-assessment, study, reflection and the integration of learning into practice.
  - Recognize the limitations of their skills, knowledge and scope.
  - Actively engage in ongoing professional development and learning.

As health scholars, naturopathic doctors are committed to lifelong learning and staying informed of current community and global health issues. They educate their patients, the public and colleagues from all health-care disciplines on the treatment and prevention of disease and the promotion of optimal levels of health and wellness. Naturopathic doctors evaluate, support and remain current in research to advance naturopathic and other related health disciplines. Through scholarly activities, they create, disseminate and apply medical knowledge.

### **Professional Competencies:**

*The naturopathic doctor will:*

- 1. Exemplify the principle of *doctor as teacher* in every patient and public interaction.**
  - Teach the principles of healthy living and preventive medicine.
- 2. Maintain and enhance professional competence through ongoing learning activities.**
  - Value continuing medical education in maintaining and enhancing medical proficiency.
  - Effectively reference and employ empirical, literary and information-technology sources.
  - Regularly self-assess professional knowledge.
  - Learn from colleagues through ongoing dialogue regarding best practices.
- 3. Critically evaluate medical information.**
  - Understand and value evidence-based medicine.
  - Critically appraise evidence to address clinical questions.
  - Appropriately integrate new information into clinical reasoning.
  - Systematically evaluate and reflect on patient outcomes.
- 4. Educate patients, colleagues, other health-care providers and the public.**
  - Conduct effective patient health education programs.
  - Effectively contribute to the exploration of public health issues through engagement and patient education.

**5. Advance the practice of naturopathic medicine through the development, critical assessment and dissemination of research and information.**

- Effectively communicate naturopathic medical knowledge.
- Mentor colleagues, particularly new entrants to the profession.
- Educate patients and members of the community on disease prevention and health promotion practices.
- Reflect the spirit of scholarly enquiry and research in the acquisition of knowledge.
- Participate in research activities as appropriate for professional practice.

## NATUROPATHIC HEALTH ADVOCATE

As health advocates, naturopathic doctors focus on the promotion of health and prevention of disease. They use their expertise to effectively influence decision-makers who positively impact the health status of individuals and communities. Naturopathic doctors influence and promote the essential role of naturopathic medicine in public health, and they understand the value of mobilizing community resources to improve access to quality healthcare. They recognize their role in efforts to change health and environmental practices, policies and legislation affecting their patients and society.

### **Professional Competencies:**

*The naturopathic doctor will:*

- 1. Promote the principles and philosophy of naturopathic medicine in advocating for sustainable, healthy environments and lifestyles for patients and society.**
  - Advance naturopathic principles and philosophy in communication with patients, health-care providers and the public.
  - Promote sustainable health practices.
  - Embody the principle of *First Do No Harm* in personal life and professional practice.
  - Educate others on the significance of environmental factors on health.
- 2. Reflect a knowledge base that enables effective health advocacy.**
  - Participate in the broader healthcare dialogue.
  - Use effective health advocacy methods.
  - Participate in organizing and mobilizing members of the community to improve health outcomes, disparities and access to health services.
  - Understand the significance of research with respect to predicting public health out-comes.
- 3. Influence others in accepting naturopathic medicine as an essential element in health promotion and disease prevention.**
  - Engage in the promotion of a wider acceptance of naturopathic medicine.
  - Communicate with national, state, provincial and/or local regulatory and administrative bodies to advocate for broader inclusion of naturopathic medicine in the health-care system
  - Communicate the naturopathic perspective to primary decision makers, media and others who have influence in healthcare.

## APPENDIX “A”: NATUROPATHIC DOCTOR’S OATH

I dedicate myself to the service of humanity as a practitioner of the art and science of naturopathic medicine.

By precept, education and example, I will assist and encourage others to strengthen their health, reduce risks for disease, and preserve the health of our planet for ourselves and future generations. I will continually endeavor to improve my abilities. I will conduct my life and practice of naturopathic medicine with integrity and freedom from prejudice. I will keep confident what should not be divulged.

I will honor the principles of naturopathic medicine:

*First, to do no harm.*

*To co-operate with the healing powers of nature.*

*To address the fundamental causes of disease.*

*To heal the whole person through individualized treatment.*

*To teach the principles of healthy living and preventive medicine.*

With my whole heart, before these witnesses, as a Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine, I pledge to remain true to this oath.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Frank JR ED (2005). The CanMEDS 2005 physician competency framework. Better standards. Better physicians. Better care. Ottawa: The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.
- Bell S et al (1997). Competency-based education in family practice. *Family Medicine* 29(10):701-7-4
- Epstein R and Hundert E (2002). Defining and assessing professional competence. *JAMA* 282(2):226-235
- Cheetham G and Chivers G (1996). Towards a holistic model of professional competence. *Journal of Eur Indust Training* 20(5):20-30
- Neufeld V et al (1998). Educating future physicians for Ontario. *Academic Medicine* 73 (11):1133-1148
- Maudsley R et al (2000). Educating future physicians for Ontario. *Academic Medicine* 75 (2):113-126

The Council of Chief Academic and Clinic Officers thanks the following institutions for their significant contributions in creating this document:

**Bastyr University**

14500 Juanita Drive NE  
Kenmore, WA 98028-4966  
425-823-1300

[www.bastyr.edu](http://www.bastyr.edu)

*Daniel K. Church, PhD, President*

**Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine**

Boucher Centre  
300-435 Columbia Street  
New Westminster, BC V3L 5N8  
604-777-9981

[www.binm.org](http://www.binm.org)

*Patricia Wolfe, B.Sc., ND, President and Executive Director*

**Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine**

1255 Sheppard Avenue East  
Toronto, ON M2K 1E2  
416-498-1255

[www.ccnm.edu](http://www.ccnm.edu)

*Bob Bernhardt, B.Sc., LLM, M.Ed., PhD (cand.), President/CEO*

**National College of Natural Medicine**

049 SW Porter Street  
Portland, OR 97201  
503-552-1555

[www.ncnm.edu](http://www.ncnm.edu)

*David Schleich, PhD, President*

**Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine**

2140 E. Broadway Road  
Tempe, AZ 85282  
480-858-9100

[www.scnm.edu](http://www.scnm.edu)

*Paul Mittman, ND, DHANP, President*

**University of Bridgeport College of Naturopathic Medicine**

Health Science Center  
60 Lafayette Street  
Bridgeport, CT 06604  
203-576-4552

[www.bridgeport.edu](http://www.bridgeport.edu)

*Guru Sandesh Singh Khalsa, ND, Dean*