

## NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE: A KEY PART TO HEALING THE NATION'S FINANCIAL HEALTH CARE CRISIS

Increasing levels of chronic disease including: diabetes, heart disease, chronic pain, cancer and obesity, have created a multi-trillions dollar financial burden on the medical system. Naturopathic medicine reduces the need for expensive conventional care while promoting health and decreasing the need for medical interventions over the long term.

### **Naturopathic medicine costs less than conventional care.**

- Use of natural health products (NHP) has the potential to improve health outcomes and reduce cost compared to conventional treatment by anywhere from 3.7- 73%. <sup>(1)</sup>
- A 2006 University of Washington study found that in WA State, naturopathic care cost insurers \$9.00 per enrollee vs. \$686.00 for conventional care. <sup>(2)</sup>
- Manual therapy cost less than primary care for neck pain and decreases recovery time, thereby also improving productivity. <sup>(3)</sup>
- One year of lifestyle intervention for patients with coronary artery disease not only improved all health outcomes and reduced the need for surgery but also cost significantly less than conventional treatment (\$7,000 vs \$31,000 –\$46,000). <sup>(4)</sup>

### **Naturopathic medicine decreases the need for medical interventions by improving patient wellbeing, preventing disease and treating disease by improving health.**

- The naturopathic emphasis on prevention and health promotion saves lives and dollars. Lifestyle modification counseling prevented more cases of diabetes than drug treatment. <sup>(5)</sup>
- It is estimated that if the current level of medical intervention continues the US will end up spending \$9.5 trillion dollars over the next 30 years caring for Cardio vascular disease, diabetes and congestive heart disease alone. By adding in greater preventive strategies to improve patients health cost could be reduced approx. \$904 billion or almost 10%<sup>(6)</sup>
- Although the initial cost of prevention and treatment using natural medicine is sometimes similar to conventional care the benefits gained by avoiding disease and their associated costs are invaluable and much preferred by patients. <sup>(7)</sup>
- Patients who received intensive lifestyle modification and naturopathic therapy for type II diabetes improved all health scores (lipids, %body fat etc.) and decreased medication requirements compared to those on standard therapy, in just one year. <sup>(8)</sup>

### **The use of Naturopathic medicine decreases total medical expenditure.**

- Total expenditure on health care by insured complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) users is less than non-CAM users (\$3,797 vs \$4,153); this is an approximate \$9.4 million saving for just 26,466 CAM-users <sup>(9)</sup>
- The most significant reduction in total medical expenditure made by using CAM, is seen in patients with the greatest disease burden, who tend to be the most expensive patients. <sup>(10)</sup>

- Naturopathic doctors, bridge are the bridge between alternative and convention car and model truly integrative care. Patients who receive care from an integrative primary care physician have reduced medical costs and need of medical intervention when compared to those receiving convention primary care. <sup>(9)</sup>
- Naturopathic medical care in Canada reduces the use of prescription medications by 53%. <sup>(11)</sup>
- Reduction in drug prescriptions (61% less) and use of conventional medical care (55% less) are substantial among CAM users. <sup>(12)</sup>

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