



House of Delegates Position Paper

Definition of Naturopathic Medicine

This paper contains the following versions:

- One line definitions of naturopathic medicine
- Brief definition of naturopathic medicine
- Paragraph definition of naturopathic medicine
- Short definition of naturopathic medicine
- One page definition of naturopathic medicine
- Comprehensive definition of naturopathic medicine

ONE LINE DEFINITIONS OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

Naturopathic physicians work with nature to restore people's health.

Naturopathic medicine: working with nature to restore people's health.

BRIEF DEFINITION OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

Naturopathic medicine is a distinct primary health care profession, emphasizing prevention, treatment and optimal health through the use of therapeutic methods and substances which encourage the person's inherent self-healing process, the vis medicatrix naturae.

PARAGRAPH DEFINITION OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

Naturopathic medicine is a distinct method of primary health care -an art, science, philosophy and practice of diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of illness. Naturopathic physicians seek to restore and maintain optimum health in their patients by emphasizing nature's inherent self-healing process, the vis medicatrix naturae. This is accomplished through education and the rational use of natural therapeutics.

SHORT DEFINITION

Naturopathic medicine is a distinct system of primary health care-an art, science and practice of preventing, diagnosing and treating conditions of the human mind and body.

Naturopathic physicians work with their patients to prevent and treat acute and chronic illness and disease, restore health and establish optimal fitness by supporting the person's inherent self-healing process, the vis medicatrix naturae. This is accomplished through:

- **Prevention**

Prevention of disease is emphasized through public health measures and hygiene as well as the encouragement and guidance of persons to adopt lifestyles which are conducive to optimal health.

- **Diagnosis**

Diagnosis and evaluation of the individual's state of health are accomplished by integrated modern and traditional, clinical and laboratory diagnostic methods.

- **Treatment and Care**

Therapeutic methods and substances are used which work in harmony with the person's inherent self-healing process, the *vis medicatrix naturae*, including: dietetics and nutritional substances, botanical medicine, psychotherapy, naturopathic physical medicine including naturopathic manipulative therapy, minor surgery, prescription medications, naturopathic obstetrics (natural childbirth), homeopathy, and acupuncture.

ONE PAGE DEFINITION OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

Overview:

Naturopathic medicine is a distinct system of primary health care -an art, science, philosophy and practice of diagnosis, treatment and prevention of illness. Naturopathic medicine is distinguished by the principles upon which its practice is based. These principles are continually reexamined in the light of scientific advances. The techniques of naturopathic medicine include modern and traditional, scientific and empirical methods. The following principles are the foundation of naturopathic medical practice:

Principles:

The Healing Power of Nature (*Vis Medicatrix Naturae*): Naturopathic medicine recognizes an inherent self-healing process in the person which is ordered and intelligent. Naturopathic physicians act to identify and remove obstacles to healing and recovery, and to facilitate and augment this inherent self-healing process.

Identify and Treat the Causes (*Tolle Causam*): The naturopathic physician seeks to identify and remove the underlying causes of illness, rather than to merely eliminate or suppress symptoms.

First Do No Harm (*Primum Non Nocere*): Naturopathic physicians follow three guidelines to avoid harming the patient:

- Utilize methods and medicinal substances which minimize the risk of harmful side effects, using the least force necessary to diagnose and treat;
- Avoid when possible the harmful suppression of symptoms;
- Acknowledge, respect and work with the individual's self-healing process.

Doctor as Teacher (*Docere*): Naturopathic physicians educate their patients and encourage self-responsibility for health. They also recognize and employ the therapeutic potential of the doctor-patient relationship.

Treat the Whole Person: Naturopathic physicians treat each patient by taking into account individual physical, mental, emotional, genetic, environmental, social, and other factors. Since total health also includes spiritual health, naturopathic physicians encourage individuals to pursue their personal spiritual development.

Prevention: Naturopathic physicians emphasize the prevention of disease -assessing risk factors, heredity and susceptibility to disease and making appropriate interventions in partnership with their patients to prevent illness. Naturopathic medicine is committed to the creation of a healthy world in which humanity may thrive.

Practice

Naturopathic Methods:

Naturopathic medicine is defined by its principles. Methods and modalities are selected and applied based upon these principles in relationship to the individual needs of each patient.

Diagnostic and therapeutic methods are selected from various sources and systems, and will continue to evolve with the progress of knowledge.

Naturopathic Practice:

Naturopathic practice includes the following diagnostic and therapeutic modalities: nutritional medicine, botanical medicine, naturopathic physical medicine including naturopathic manipulative therapy, public health measures and hygiene, counseling, minor surgery, homeopathy, acupuncture, prescription medication, intravenous and injection therapy, naturopathic obstetrics (natural childbirth), and appropriate methods of laboratory and clinical diagnosis.

COMPREHENSIVE DEFINITION OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

Overview:

Naturopathic medicine is a distinct system of primary health care -an art, science, philosophy and practice of diagnosis, treatment and prevention of illness. Naturopathic medicine is distinguished by the principles which underlie and determine its practice. These principles are based upon the objective observation of the nature of health and disease, and are continually reexamined in the light of scientific advances. Methods used are consistent with these principles and are chosen upon the basis of patient individuality. Naturopathic physicians are trained as primary health care physicians whose diverse techniques include modern and traditional, scientific and empirical methods. The following principles are the foundation for the practice of naturopathic medicine:

Principles:

The Healing Power of Nature (*Vis Medicatrix Naturae*)

The healing power of nature is the inherent self-organizing and healing process of living systems which establishes, maintains and restores health. Naturopathic medicine recognizes this healing process to be ordered and intelligent. It is the naturopathic physician's role to support, facilitate and augment this process by identifying and removing obstacles to health and recovery, and by supporting the creation of a healthy internal and external environment.

Identify and Treat the Causes (*Tolle Causam*)

Illness does not occur without cause. Causes may originate in many areas. Underlying causes of illness and disease must be identified and removed before complete recovery can occur. Symptoms can be expressions of the body's attempt to defend itself, to adapt and recover, to heal itself, or may be results of the causes of disease. The naturopathic physician seeks to treat the causes of disease, rather than to merely eliminate or suppress symptoms.

First Do No Harm (*Primum Non Nocere*)

Naturopathic physicians follow three precepts to avoid harming the patient:

- Naturopathic physicians utilize methods and medicinal substances which minimize the risk of harmful effects, and apply the least possible force or intervention necessary to diagnose illness and restore health.

- Whenever possible the suppression of symptoms is avoided as suppression generally interferes with the healing process.
- Naturopathic physicians respect and work with the vis medicatrix naturae in diagnosis, treatment and counseling, for if this self-healing process is not respected the patient may be harmed.

Doctor as Teacher (Docere)

The original meaning of the word "doctor" is teacher. A principal objective of naturopathic medicine is to educate the patient and emphasize self-responsibility for health. Naturopathic physicians also recognize and employ the therapeutic potential of the doctor-patient relationship.

Treat the Whole Person

Health and disease result from a complex of physical, mental, emotional, genetic, environmental, social and other factors. Since total health also includes spiritual health, naturopathic physicians encourage individuals to pursue their personal spiritual development. Naturopathic medicine recognizes the harmonious functioning of all aspects of the individual as being essential to health. The multifactorial nature of health and disease requires a personalized and comprehensive approach to diagnosis and treatment. Naturopathic physicians treat the whole person, taking all of these factors into account.

Prevention

Naturopathic medical colleges emphasize the study of health as well as disease. The prevention of disease and the attainment of optimal health in patients are primary objectives of naturopathic medicine. In practice, these objectives are accomplished through education and the promotion of healthy ways of living.

Naturopathic physicians assess risk factors, heredity and susceptibility to disease, and make appropriate interventions in partnership with their patients to prevent illness. Naturopathic medicine asserts that one cannot be healthy in an unhealthy environment and is committed to the creation of a world in which humanity may thrive.

Practice

Naturopathic Methods:

Naturopathic medicine is defined primarily by its fundamental principles. Methods and modalities are selected and applied based upon these principles in relationship to the individual needs of each patient. Diagnostic and therapeutic methods are selected from various sources and systems and will continue to evolve with the progress of knowledge.

Naturopathic Practice:

Naturopathic practice includes the following diagnostic and treatment modalities: utilization of all methods of clinical and laboratory diagnostic testing including diagnostic radiology and other imaging techniques; nutritional medicine, dietetics and therapeutic fasting; medicines of mineral, animal and botanical origin; hygiene and public health measures; naturopathic physical medicine including naturopathic manipulative therapies; the use of water, heat, cold, light, electricity, air, earth, electromagnetic and mechanical devices, ultrasound, and therapeutic exercise; homeopathy; psychotherapy and counseling; acupuncture, injection and intravenous therapy; minor surgery; prescription medication; and naturopathic obstetrics (natural childbirth).