

## For Immediate Release

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### **Massachusetts Governor Signs Naturopathic Medicine Licensure Bill**

*A historic moment for the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, and for health care – 20 years in the making*

(Washington, DC) January 12, 2017 – On Wednesday, Gov. Charlie Baker (R-MA) signed a bill, [S2335](#), to license Naturopathic Doctors in Massachusetts. Effective September 1, 2017, the bill will ensure the safe practice of naturopathic medicine in the state, increase citizens' access to high-quality integrative health care, and allow patients to make more informed decisions about their health.

This moment is historic for the naturopathic profession and for health care. Massachusetts is the second state to gain licensure within the last two months. Pennsylvania achieved regulation in November, 2016. Over the course of 24 years, similar bills were rejected in Massachusetts. Fortunately, with support from the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP), members of the Massachusetts Society of Naturopathic Physicians (MSND) made tremendous strides leading to ultimate enactment of the bill.

"I, along with my colleagues and friends at the MSND, am thrilled to join the ranks of providers in the state. We look forward to bringing naturopathic medicine to the citizens of Massachusetts," said Amy Rothenberg, ND, president, MSND. "I applaud Gov. Baker and the legislative leaders who studied and vetted this profession for more than 20 years and came to understand the unique role that licensed Naturopathic Doctors can play. This bill allows the people of Massachusetts to access well-educated, well-trained Naturopathic Doctors for their expertise in both preventive medicine and natural integrative care. We are thrilled for this cap to our efforts."

Naturopathic Doctors play a pivotal role in integrative health care, especially when it comes to treatment of [opioid addiction](#) and chronic pain. In fact, members of Congress have made clear their interest in licensed Naturopathic Doctors becoming employed by the [Veterans Health Administration](#). The AANP is currently working with the Agency's Office of Patient Centered Care to determine the role that Naturopathic Doctors could play.

Naturopathic medicine focuses on prevention of illness and whole-person wellness. [Highly-trained](#) Naturopathic Doctors utilize natural, noninvasive, and nontoxic therapies to treat the causes of illness rather than focusing exclusively on the symptoms. The guiding principle of naturopathic care is to work with the body's inherent ability to heal itself, educating patients in the steps needed to achieve and maintain overall health. Enactment of S2335 will enable patients in Massachusetts to improve their quality of health.

"While we celebrate licensure wins in every state, we're overjoyed that Massachusetts residents can now visit a licensed Naturopathic Doctor," commented Jaclyn Chasse, ND, president, AANP. "As a Massachusetts resident, it's hard to convey in words the enthusiasm and triumph I feel witnessing the strong advocacy efforts that Naturopathic Doctors have poured into obtaining licensure here."

A [top priority](#) for the AANP is obtaining licensure in all 50 states by 2025. Each year, the AANP provides advocacy grants to state associations that are nearing this goal. Additionally, the Institute of Natural Medicine ([INM](#)) funds a full-time States Coordinator to guide naturopathic state organizations in educating policymakers and the public about the benefits of licensure.

"The Institute vows to continue supporting these efforts," stated the INM president, Michelle Simon, ND, PhD. "We are truly overjoyed to have helped catalyze the momentum we are now seeing. Indeed, 13 states are poised to advance legislation in the coming year."

States that currently regulate Naturopathic Doctors include AK, AZ, CA, CO, CT, HI, KS, MA, MD, ME, MN, MT, ND, NH, OR, PA, UT, WA, and VT, as well as the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

"This is what we're here for; to help states obtain licensure," commented Ryan Cliche, executive director, AANP. "The AANP is beyond excited at the results of the hard work and dedication shown by state association leaders and their members. The AANP is thankful to Dr. Rothenberg, Paul Herscu, ND, MPH, the MSND, AANP members, and the naturopathic community for coming together to help push this bill over the finish line."

Those constituencies will gather in Washington, DC, in April to share information to boost licensure prospects for other naturopathic state associations, as well as to hold meetings on Capitol Hill to educate members of Congress about the benefits of state licensure and the role Naturopathic Doctors play in providing safe, effective, and affordable health care.

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**About the AANP:**

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians is the professional association that represents licensed Naturopathic Doctors. The AANP strives to make naturopathic medicine available to every American, and to increase recognition of Naturopathic Doctors as the identified authorities on natural medicine. Learn more at [www.naturopathic.org](http://www.naturopathic.org).