ACTION REQUEST: AANP requests amending the Public Health Service Act to obtain access to the same loans, scholarships and primary care residencies as MDs and DOs.

Naturopathic medical students incur a debt equivalent to that of conventional medical students, yet have access to no federal loan repayment programs, are excluded from programs in the PHSA, and are not eligible for federally supported residency programs.

- The U.S. Secretary of Education recognizes the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) as the national accrediting agency for programs leading to the Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine (N.D. or N.M.D.) or Doctor of Naturopathy (N.D.) degree. Like the Liaison Committee on Medical Education—the accreditor for MD programs—the CNME is recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education. The CNME was most recently re-recognized by the Secretary of Education in February 2011 for a term of five years, which is the maximum allowable term; additionally, the Secretary found that the CNME was in full and complete compliance with the U.S. Department of Education’s rigorous regulations.

- The naturopathic medical program is a resident course of at least 4 years and 4,100 hours of study. Clinical education requirements, as mandated by accreditation agencies, include a minimum of 1,200 clock hours in direct patient contact.

- All licensed naturopathic physicians have matriculated from the CNME approved schools and successfully passed a national exam administered by the North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners (NABNE).

- Both the Department of Education and the Carnegie Institute classify the ND degree as a First-Professional Degree under Doctorate-Professional (Clinical), on par with MD and DO.

- Each of the schools is also accredited by the regional accrediting authorities recognized by the Department.

There are seven accredited schools in North America graduating between 400-500 primary care doctors each year. It is only equitable that naturopathic schools and students have access to the same loans, scholarships and residency opportunities as their conventional colleagues. The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians is seeking education equity by amending the Public Health Service Act to obtain access to the following:

- Loans for Disadvantaged Students (LDS)
- Primary Care Loans (PCL)
- Health Professions Student Loans (HPSL)
- Health Education Assistance Loans (HEAL)
- Primary Care Training and Enhancement Grants and Residencies (Section 5301 of PL 111-148)

**Naturopathic Medicine, as defined by the US Department of Labor, is to**

“Diagnose, treat, and help prevent diseases using a system of practice that is based on the natural healing capacity of individuals. May use physiological, psychological or mechanical methods. May also use natural medicines, prescription or legend drugs, foods, herbs, or other natural remedies.”