American Association of Naturopathic Physicians

2009 Survey of the Naturopathic Profession

June 2010
Letter from AANP Executive Director, Karen E. Howard

I’ve always known that the naturopathic profession consists of some of the most compassionate and passionate people in the world. I’ve believed that your commitment to the medicine is a reflection of your commitment to the planet. And I sensed that your desire to practice what you preach is reflected in the way you choose to work - that balance is a key component of health. With the results of our first professional survey, we can now begin to articulate what I think we’ve known all along. And we can begin to see how and what the AANP can do to help ensure the success of the professionals we represent.

So just who are you? I am sure it will come as no surprise that, in many ways, you do not reflect what some would call mainstream America. 70% of NDs are women, and only 80% self-identify as ‘heterosexual.’ 87% are White, non Hispanic. And you are young! This is a profession that is growing. The number of physicians coming into the profession has outpaced our veterans. The survey shows that the largest group of NDs has been in practice for 6-12 years, the second largest group is those who have been in practice for 3-5 years. When it comes to the work itself, you clearly love what you do - and it’s not just about the money. Over 80% describe themselves as Satisfied to Very Satisfied and the level of satisfaction is not tied to salary. What is tied to salary is the number of patients you see.

All together, 68% of NDs see fewer than 21 patients a week! I suspect you won’t be surprised to learn that 55% of NDs are working as solo practitioners or are principals of group practices, and of those NDs, 77% see more than 31 patients a week and earn over $120,000 a year. Another 26% work in clinics or are employed in group practices. Further evaluation shows that it’s in the 5th and 6th year of practice where income takes a dramatic rise. It is clear that AANP must do all we can to support our new graduates as they transition during this period.

You are clearly more motivated to change the world than to profit from it. 69% treat the underserved and 45% offer sliding fee scales for people who suffer from adrenal fatigue/endocrine issues, women’s health and aging issues and digestive or IBS issues (the top 3 reasons people visit an ND). You volunteer, a lot, for some wonderful causes, including the AANP. And 66% of you green your practices.

It’s an honor to represent a profession that walks that proverbial talk. We at the AANP thank you for your service.
Methods

• Logic Model
  - Aligns with AANP Board’s global end statements
  - Questions were congruent with these ends

• Survey
  - Opened to members and non-members
  - 509 Responses!
General Demographics

- 71% are women
- 87% are white, non Hispanics
- 81% are self-identified as heterosexual
Practice Information

• Largest group of NDs has been in practice between 6 -12 years
  - Second largest group -3-5 years!
• 55% of NDs are in solo practices or principals of a group practice
  - 26% work for a group practice or in a clinic or hospital
  - 19% are outside a clinic setting (corporate, faculty, government, etc)
# Practice Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patient Load*</th>
<th># of patients/week</th>
<th>NDs in practice &gt; 6 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All NDs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68%</td>
<td>&lt; 21</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>&gt; 30</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Solo Practitioners and Group Practice Principals
## Practice Information

### Earnings over $120K per year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>21 - 30 patients/week</th>
<th>56%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&gt;30 patients/week</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Solo Practitioners and Group Practice Principals
Practice Information

- Year six income rises dramatically for all NDs
- AANP members are higher income earners
- Highest earners attribute greater than 20% of income to supplement sales
- 13% of practices collect patient outcomes data
- 14% of NDs utilize EMR systems
About Their Patients

• Top Reasons for Visiting an ND
  - Adrenal Fatigue/Endocrine Issues
  - Women’s Health and Aging Issues
  - Digestive/IBS Issues
Physician Satisfaction

- Satisfaction level - 3.6 out of 5
- 80% “Satisfied” to “Very Satisfied”
Social Involvement

- 69% see the underserved in their practices
  - 15% of clients are minorities
  - 19% are low income
  - 18% are over the age of 65
- 45% of practices offer sliding fee scales
- 14% provide services to the under-served outside of the US as a volunteer
- 43% volunteered for 1-3 weeks in the past 3 years
Political Involvement

• 52% of NDs volunteer for the AANP and/or the profession

• Top 3 reasons:
  - Desire to make a contribution
  - Feeling of duty to serve the profession
  - Enjoy networking and feelings of collegiality
Membership Savvy

- AANP members were far more comfortable speaking about AANP legislative activities such as state licensure, lobbying tools, loan repayment, and DSHEA
- AANP members were far more likely to advocate for the profession
Planet Involvement

- 66% of NDs consider themselves actively involved in greening their practices
  - Recycling, green cleaning products, organic/local food, public transportation and lighting were top activities
Planet Involvement

• Top Groups Supported by the Profession
  - Sierra Club- 16%
  - Environmental Working Group- 12%
  - Natural Resources Defense Council- 5%

• Other Groups Supported
  - World Wildlife Fund- 4%
  - Organic Consumers Association- 3%
Thank You

Send questions to member.services@naturopathic.org