



# Including Naturopathic Physicians in Medicare Education and Licensure

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## **Education**

Licensed NDs attend 4-year, graduate level, naturopathic medical schools that derive their accreditation from the US Department of Education. There are currently five such schools in the U.S.

Naturopathic medical schools provide equivalent foundational coursework as conventional medical schools. The naturopathic medicine curriculum includes cardiology, neurology, radiology, obstetrics, gynecology, immunology, dermatology, and pediatrics. In addition, ND programs provide extensive education unique to the naturopathic approach, emphasizing disease prevention and whole person wellness. This includes the prescription of clinical doses of vitamins and herbs and safe administration via oral, topical, intramuscular, and intravenous routes. Degrees are awarded after extensive classroom study and clinical training.

## **Licensing**

There are 4,500 licensed naturopathic physicians in the United States. In order to become licensed to practice, a naturopathic physician must graduate from an accredited school of naturopathic medicine and pass a rigorous national licensing examination. Once licensed, naturopathic physicians must fulfill annual, state-mandated continuing education requirements. Currently, 20 states and territories license naturopathic physicians.

Licensure of naturopathic physicians is critical for ensuring public safety. Licensure enable consumers to distinguish highly trained naturopathic physicians from others who may call themselves naturopaths or naturopathic doctors but who have not had the same rigorous training as licensed naturopathic physicians.