

For Immediate Release

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**Licensed Naturopathic Doctors to Urge Congressional Support for Insurance
Nondiscrimination**

(Washington, DC) April 19, 2017 – The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) will host its annual [DC Federal Legislative Initiative](#) (DC FLI), April 29-30 at the Hyatt Regency in Crystal City, Virginia. This year's DC FLI will urge congressional support for enforcement of the insurance nondiscrimination provision of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. § 300gg–5).

The provision is word for word from a pre-existing Medicare Advantage statute. It states that insurers “shall not discriminate with respect to participation under the plan or coverage against any health care provider who is acting within the scope of that provider’s license or certification under applicable State law.”

The intent of the provision is to add qualified provider types to health plans, whether private health plans or self-funded ERISA plans. It does not require insurers to add any services not already covered by the given health plans, nor does it require all qualified providers within a provider type to be included in a plan.

“If this nondiscrimination provision were to be fully implemented, health care competition would increase, driving down costs,” stated Michael Traub, ND, chair of the AANP’s Insurance Nondiscrimination Work Group. “Patients would have additional incentive to keep themselves healthy through their choice of integrative health care providers who focus on prevention and wellness.”

Even after publication of non-binding FAQ guidances by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), insurers are not clear on the statute’s intent or how they should comply with it. The attendees of the DC FLI – upwards of 150 licensed Naturopathic Doctors and naturopathic medical students – will unite from all across the country to advocate, asking that their elected representatives send messages to the Secretary of the HHS.

“Unambiguous enforcement guidance from HHS would provide Americans with a stronger incentive to take responsibility for their own health through licensed provider types that emphasize illness prevention. The result would undoubtedly be a considerable savings in health care expenditures,” commented Dr. Traub.

Health care in the U.S. is almost entirely oriented to treating patients once they are ill – most often through costly prescription drugs, invasive surgeries, and hospitalization. The DC FLI will call to attention the need for NDs to have a greater role as primary care providers. The AANP, through the DC FLI, is working to educate members of Congress about the role licensed Naturopathic Doctors play in providing safe, effective, and affordable health care.

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About the AANP:

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