



November 15, 2016

Dear Dr. Gaudet and Colleagues in the VHA Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation:

We, the undersigned, are veterans or the family members of veterans who have obtained treatment by licensed naturopathic physicians.

We applaud the VA for its progress in providing integrative healthcare to veterans, especially for those of us who live with chronic conditions - pain, anxiety, depression, diabetes - that are resistant to a conventional or quick fix. The Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation is, we understand, the focal point for the incorporation of integrative healthcare.

We ask that you speedily include licensed naturopathic doctors (NDs) in the spectrum of healthcare professionals employed at the VA. Licensed NDs are trained in the use of safe and effective natural therapies, in addition to conventional therapies. Licensed NDs have attended a 4-year, federally accredited post-graduate naturopathic medical school and have passed national licensing exams. Their training emphasizes illness prevention, proactive self-care (such as good nutrition, sound sleep and exercise, and stress reduction), and chronic disease treatment aimed at helping the body heal itself.

Our experience is that naturopathic care can often reduce or eliminate the need for drugs or surgery. Especially when it is common to be prescribed opioids and other drugs for conditions such as chronic pain, allowing us to see NDs who are highly skilled in non-toxic, non-addictive health approaches seems like a "natural" offering at VA facilities.

We could not be more enthusiastic about the benefits of naturopathic healthcare in our own lives. If a licensed naturopathic physician were on staff near where we live, we would want to be treated by that person. It would move the VA much closer to its worthy goals of delivering personalized, proactive, and patient-driven care to America's veterans.

Thank you very much for your consideration.