

HOUSE BILL 1717

My name is Jan Bourdelle, I'm a self-care educator and neuromuscular massage therapist focusing on pain reduction through client education and a blend of techniques I perfected over the years. I am here as someone who has heard hundreds of stories from clients who sought natural health after the medical system couldn't help them. I want to explain what a traditional naturopath is compared to the new one the bill creates. I am also here to warn Pennsylvanians that this bill, as written, will plunge us into a complete blackout of existing natural health information, skills, and products from which we will never recover. I am very grateful to have the chance to speak to you. I want to thank Representative Harhart and Attorney Crawford for allowing me to speak with them months ago, and for inviting me on the panel. I worked very hard researching this bill, the documented meanings of its terms, and in so doing I learned about the groundwork it lays.

The traditional naturopath is a teaching guide to the whole body, seeing it as a series of systems rather than just physical individual parts. The naturopath educates and empowers clients to support a body system that may be causing symptoms, expecting symptoms to relent as the system gets stronger. Unlike the protocol your doctor is mandated to follow, the Naturopath has no preplanned course of action – possible solutions are based on the unique lifestyle and issues of the client, his food intake, psychological and social circumstances. That's all there is to it. There is no attempt to diagnose, treat, or prescribe medicine. Whether you personally have experienced this as a valid field or not, millions of people have made it their lifestyle for good health over thousands of years.

Our American medical system uses allopathic medicine. The medical model looks for single, very specific causes for symptoms, and it responds with standardized treatments and pharmaceuticals, that have been shown to help most people, most of the time. That's why your doctor appointment is ten minutes instead of the half an hour of just thirty years ago, Medicine decided to become a science-based entity, too, and by the 1970s began to set aside common solutions like epsom salts and castor oil for analytical blood tests and much greater research into surgery. We can do miracles with these tools. They are extremely direct, powerful and can be very dangerous if mismanaged. We all sign release forms in case we are crippled or die in an operation. We all watch the ads that severely warn us of life-threatening or fatal results with prescriptions. There have been laws for years protecting the public to make sure this profession is as safe as possible. We have all learned to be very afraid of trusting anyone's advice with these serious tools except medically trained professionals. HB 1717 tries to convince us natural health is another high-risk industry that needs legislation and extreme management. That is completely untrue.

There have NOT been laws for the natural health services and products because they fall mostly under common sense and the use of food compounds. American medicine uses preparations made by laboratory methods, taking the most active ingredients or constituents, which typically transform many relatively safe herbs into toxic drugs. Naturopathic remedies keep products closer to the whole state. These simpler health aids have always been the medicine of the common man throughout history. If they were too complex and dangerous for people to navigate safely, we would have outlawed everything naturopathic in nature long before now along with the naturopathic doctors.

So why are we considering outlawing traditional naturopathic doctors and their field completely, today? Whether HB 1717 was written in the spirit to do so or not, literal translation is clear. The

broad language of this bill is opening the door for the elimination of all possible competition from traditional medicine to the new field of medically-derived naturopathic services, Here is the reason why based on easy to find undebatable research.

The shining star in our economy is the Medical industry. We don't like to call it that because we trust it to care for us, watch out for us, and nurture us. In economics none of that is involved. According to a government statistics website (listed at the bottom of these remarks), this industry is one of the fastest growing and largest businesses in the U.S. today. Its potential for new jobs is thrilling news today, and you have seen all the new buildings go up all around you with offices, labs, and related services. Unfortunately, this industry is being built mostly on the temporary swell of the baby boomers turning geriatric. That swell is estimated to have run its course by 2034, so the industry must quickly build new markets to support their frantic growth of today. As in any business, it is easier to absorb an existing field of services than to develop it. The medical community has been preparing the legislative pathway to take the natural health industry by force for years, by claiming its right to it as protectors of public welfare and safety. They started decades ago with restricting chiropractors and true osteopathic doctors who also did manipulations. They have restricted freedom of speech by nearly every natural health service including massage therapists, health food store owners, and product manufacturers. You can easily see the history of various bills on the internet.

The medical industry has created the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians. They have been going from state to state promoting legislation across the U.S. like our HB 1717. The AANP wants to bring the entire natural health market into their existing structure of paid doctor appointments, tests to support the labs and hospitals, and prescription-only vitamins to support the pharmaceutical industry. This isn't "Some conspiracy theory" – this is documented sound business maneuvering like we saw as Bill Gates battled everybody in his way. Our emotional tie to our health doesn't make the medical industry something different than a business. The AANP is in a hurry as they have little time left to completely redefine what natural health has meant for centuries.

The AANP helped create the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education. The CNME named in HB 1717 is a college accrediting organization who has approved only five U.S. schools (that is a 3000 mile spread) who may offer a medically understood and approved naturopathy degree. The curriculum will be completely alien to natural health as it is designed by all medically trained personnel (no traditional naturopaths). HB 1717 creates the Formulary Committee consisting of all medically trained people and no traditional naturopaths. They will choose the methods, and products the new medical doctor can offer – that ONLY a licensed naturopathic doctor can offer. Those products will have to be made controlled substances, which removes them from the open market. Laws have been written throughout the last decade waiting to be cinched together with the creation of this new doctor, who will be the sole master over an industry one single curriculum and even one type of professional could never fully embrace,

Listen to this excerpt from the bill: *Terminology.* --A business entity may not utilize in connection with a business name or activity the words naturopathic doctor, naturopath, doctor of naturopathic medicine, naturopathic health care, naturopathic medicine or a derivative of those terms and their related abbreviations, which imply directly or indirectly that naturopathic services are being provided, unless the services of the business are provided by licensees. Did you ever hear of a word and all its forms being completely reserved for just one job description?

The bill doesn't give any credit to traditional naturopathic doctors who hold a doctorate in their field.

Can our current naturopaths become part of the new medical world? Although it is hard to believe a traditional naturopath could desert their lives long enough to meet all the new incredible financial and time requirements of the five U.S. CNME-approved schools, they too would be muzzled by this bill to promote only that which is allowed by the medical community. The two worlds operate completely differently – it would be a total career change. If there were any resemblance, we would be grandfathering in the traditional naturopaths we have.

HB 1717 is a staggering sweeping bill that eliminates so much just to create a new job and develop a market. Let the medical community create the new doctor, and let that field built its own market based on fair business practices like showing value, and honest marketing. Let the public have a choice who they use, and when. Many suggestions have been made along the way in other states to create different titles for the new or the old positions currently held, so that no knowledge is lost by eliminating the naturopaths we have.

The Pennsylvania Medicaid Policy Center said we paid for assistance to nearly one in five residents as of February 2010, with expected higher costs in the future. Currently, consumers typically pay for naturopathic services and products out of their own pockets. Big government expense isn't involved, since there are no expensive doctor visits, lab tests, prescriptions, specialists, etc. Since medical associated costs are cited in source after source as the item that will destroy our government, why would Pennsylvania want to embrace an industry's growth plan that ends up in the taxpayers' laps? The AANP has allowed their new doctor to operate independently for now, without referrals, but once the field explodes, all the usual costs and free access will be no doubt be lost. All those dollars for natural health products can be government-paid prescriptions.

Worst of all for me, I will have to use strong medicines which have always made me very sick, and I will have to pay high prices, and be forced through specialist after specialist if my problems come back. Without all the natural guidance from naturopaths and the safe products I rely on faithfully, they'll be fighting my pain with high-risk drugs again instead of letting me keep my weak constitution in shape.

Giving Pennsylvanians the right to maintain their bodies with the tools God made, isn't a freedom that puts the government or others at risk. What other industry is given the power to outlaw a related business by

- illegalizing professionals in a coveted field, completely rewriting the job description to fit their own business practices,
- wiping out all businesses who offer anything related to the new job workscope?
- even though efforts to prove the competing business is dangerous, have completely failed?

Please don't pass a law that creates a monopoly and steals our dignity by removing free choice over our bodies.

Government statistics on growing industry can be seen at
(<http://www.bls.gov/oco/cg/cgs035.htm>)

Medicaid Enrollment increasing, says PA Medicaid Policy Center at Pitt's GSPH – UPMC, Pittsburgh, PA
<http://www.upmc.com/MediaRelations/NewsReleases/2010/Pages/Medicaid-Enrollment-Increasing.aspx>