



MEDICAL SOCIETY OF VIRGINIA Issue Backgrounder

Please oppose HJ 124 Study of naturopathic “physicians”

Issue Background

Alternative health care providers known as naturopathic “physicians” have sought to expand their scope of practice to be able to provide primary care health care services in Virginia. They have called upon the General Assembly in recent years to grant them the authority to practice alternative primary care in Virginia. Naturopathic “physicians” have sought the ability to order and interpret diagnostic tests, perform minor surgeries, and provide pediatric and obstetrical care for patients.

While there are fewer than two dozen naturopathic “physicians” in Virginia, they claim that they will be able to remedy access to care issues in the commonwealth.

HJ 124 (Kilgore) directs the Joint Commission on Health Care (JCHC) to examine the feasibility and effectiveness of a pilot program to allow naturopathic “physicians” to provide health services to adults in rural Southwest Virginia.

MSV Talking Points

- » All Virginians deserve access to high-quality, well trained health care providers. The education and training naturopathic “physicians” receive is neither equivalent nor comparable to the education and training physicians receive, and the licensure of those practitioners will threaten quality of care.
- » A primary care physician undergoes 12,000 to 16,000 hours of supervised training as part of a residency program; naturopathic “physicians” have no uniform or mandatory residency training requirements (i.e., undergo 0 hours of residency training.)
- » The medical efficacies of the treatment modalities offered by naturopathic “physicians” are unproven.
- » Naturopathic “physicians” have no required continuing medical education (CME) requirements; physicians undergo a minimum of 60 hours of CME training every two years.
- » Naturopathic “physicians” will not solve access to care issues in rural or underserved areas of Virginia. To even consider naturopathic “physicians” to be a viable option as primary health care providers is inappropriate for the safety and welfare of patients in Virginia.

For more information, contact the Medical Society of Virginia’s government affairs department by phone at 804 | 343-1185, or visit the MSV Web site, www.msv.org/legislative.

