



UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII SYSTEM

Legislative Testimony

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By

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HB 2312 – RELATING TO NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE

Chair Yamane and colleagues, we wish to speak in support of HB 2312 that removes full prescriptive authority from Naturopathic Practitioners. The public should be aware that the education of Naturopathic Practitioners is quite different from that of Allopathic Physicians – for example, as trained at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, John A. Burns School of Medicine. Although Naturopathic Practitioners have a valuable role to play on the healthcare team, their classroom education is largely limited to undergraduate college-level basic science courses and less than one year of full-time clinical exposure. At this point, the Naturopathic trainee is ready to prescribe whatever medicines are on the state Naturopathic formulary.

In contrast, following a college degree that includes many of the courses taught to Naturopathic Practitioners, the medical student at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, John A. Burns School of Medicine must subsequently complete two full years of graduate level basic science followed by two full years of clinical training in a breadth of clinical settings and practice specialties. Following four years of medical school, the

graduate of the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, John A. Burns School of Medicine must complete an additional three to six year residency training program to become licensed and boarded in a specialty area such as internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics-gynecology, psychiatry, pathology, surgery or family medicine. At that point, the Allopathic Physician has full prescribing authority.

In a recently passed bill, Naturopathic Practitioners were given the ability to prescribe not only natural herbal products and vitamins, but also ANY drug that their self-regulated formulary board desired. Antibiotics, cardiac medications, and cancer drugs are strong medications for those with such limited training and clinical experience to prescribe. It would seem prudent, for the safety of the people of Hawai'i, that the legislature either approve a formulary more aligned with the training of these practitioners or modify the Naturopathic formulary board to have a balancing participation by Allopathic Physicians and Pharmacists to address which medicines would be prescribed by Naturopathic Practitioners.

As someone who has served as a preceptor for Naturopathic trainees in my former faculty role in Oregon, I am very aware of the practice strengths and limitations of these allies in healthcare delivery. It is hoped that we can thoughtfully define a formulary that permits the safe practice of Naturopathic Practitioners in Hawai'i.