

Illinois State Medical Society



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Members of the Illinois General Assembly

FROM: James E. Tierney, Vice President
Robert John Kane, Legal Counsel
Kimberly B. Janas, Assistant Vice President
Erin O'Brien, Assistant Vice President

RE: Opposition to Licensure of Naturopathic "Physicians" – HB 3508

DATE: February 27, 2015

The physician members of the Illinois State Medical Society respectively urge you to vote "NO" on House Bill 3508, a measure that would amend the Illinois Medical Practice Act and license "naturopathic physicians" to practice medicine.

The Illinois General Assembly has repeatedly rejected previous legislative proposals to license naturopaths in Illinois, thus acknowledging that the education and training of a naturopath is not equal or even similar to that of a medical doctor. Naturopathic education focuses much of its attention on botanical medicine, homeopathy, hydrotherapy and counseling, acupuncture and Chinese therapies.

Naturopathic treatments include colonic irrigation (enemas) and fasting for "detoxification," hydrotherapy (wrapping part or all of the body in wet towels), homeopathy, acupuncture, chiropractic manipulation, aromatherapy, arduous dietary regimens, intravenous vitamin C, hydrogen peroxide and ozone, whole enzyme pills, herbs, desiccated animal organs, and other "natural remedies."

There is no consistent application of evidenced-based principles and scientific study for naturopathic treatments. The naturopathic profession's reluctance and/or inability to apply evidence-based principles and scientific study to its treatment modalities is of great concern. **The mechanism of action and the efficacy of many naturopathic treatment modalities are not scientifically supported, and many are considered unsafe yet continue to be offered to patients.**

Compared to medical school and residency training, a naturopathic education consists of relatively few contact hours of study on pharmacological treatment of disease, and provides virtually no clinical reinforcement of pharmaceutical intervention on patients during clinical rotations or optional post-graduate training. **One important component to consider in the debate over naturopath licensure is whether a practitioner with such limited exposure to pharmaceuticals can appropriately treat patients who take prescription medicines regularly or who would likely benefit from pharmacological intervention.**

For these reasons, we respectively urge you to vote "NO" on HB 3508.