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Health and Government
Operations Committee

Government Operations and Estates
and Trusts Subcommittee

Health Facilities and
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Health and Government Operations Committee

**HB937 Naturopathic Doctors- Formulary Council Membership, Formulary Content,
and Scope of Practice**

March 3, 2020

As a quick refresher for the Committee, in 2014 we passed the bill that licensed naturopathic doctors. Then in 2016, as required by the licensure bill, we passed the bill that established the Naturopathic Doctors Formulary Council within the Maryland Board of Physicians. They are tasked with developing and recommending a formulary for use by licensed naturopaths that the Board of Physicians must approve. They review the formulary annually to decide if changes need to be made to the practice of naturopathic medicine. Last year, we introduced an iteration of the bill before you today and after working with stakeholders during the interim to accommodate some concerns, we have HB 937.

WHAT DOES THIS BILL DO?

House Bill 937 would expand the formulary for naturopathic doctors to include all prescription drugs and devices, excluding controlled substances. It would also expand their authority from just dispensing and ordering to include prescribing and administering. Lastly, it adds a nurse practitioner as a member of the Formulary Council.

WHAT IS THE NEED FOR THE BILL?

When the initial licensure bill passed back in 2014, we made some concessions in order to get the bill passed but it was always our intent to revisit the issue of prescribing. This bill solves that problem by expanding their scope to give them prescriptive authority should the Formulary Council and the Board of Physicians allow it. However, this bill does not give them the authority to start prescribing every drug that is out there. They have to go before the Formulary Council with the request and then the Council will decide whether to recommend that authority, which then has to be approved by the Board of Physicians.

It's important to note that prescribing drugs is not at the core of naturopathic doctors' practice and philosophy but there are certain instances when it is necessary and without having this authority, the treatment of their patients is hindered, and then they must send their patients to another doctor.

Neighboring jurisdictions permit this and we just want to allow our naturopathic doctors the ability to provide the same level care to their patients.

I urge the Committee to favorably report HB 937.