

February 26, 2025

**Position: Support HB 867**

Madam Chair, members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Dr. Anna Sattah, a conventionally trained ICU physician certified by the Institute for Functional Medicine. Practicing intensive care through the COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the urgent need to address chronic disease before it escalates.

Naturopathic doctors, or NDs, complete rigorous, science-based medical training, including a four-year degree from accredited schools. Their education covers pharmacology, clinical diagnostics, and treatment modalities, with a strong focus on preventative care, nutrition, and lifestyle interventions — essential tools for managing chronic illnesses like diabetes and hypertension.

I've worked directly with several NDs and have been impressed by their comprehensive training and commitment to safe, effective, and holistic care. Yet in Maryland, NDs face unnecessary restrictions — most notably, the lack of prescribing authority. This creates barriers not only for the doctors but for their patients.

Consider a patient with diabetes who is resistant to medication, seeking help from an ND to manage their condition through lifestyle changes. An ND can explain how medications, combined with personalized nutrition and exercise plans, can stabilize blood sugar while supporting long-term health goals. Without prescribing rights, the patient must schedule additional appointments with another provider just to access medications — an unnecessary hurdle that can delay or derail their care.

Granting NDs prescribing authority would streamline patient care, allowing them to integrate pharmaceutical and lifestyle interventions without forcing patients to navigate between multiple providers. This improves access to effective, well-rounded treatment.

I strongly urge you to support this legislation. Naturopathic doctors have the training, expertise, and patient-centered approach that will enhance healthcare in Maryland. Let's remove these artificial barriers and create a more integrative, accessible system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.