

February 27, 2025

**Position: Support HB 867**

Madam Chair, Members of the Committee, my name is Dr. Jillian Casey and I am speaking today as a clinician, a public health practitioner with a Masters in Health Behavior and Health Education, and as Vice President of the Maryland Naturopathic Doctors Association. Like many of the 63 licensed NDs practicing in Maryland, I am here because I yearned to raise my daughter near family.

I was not equipped for how challenging it would be to effectively serve my patients in a state that artificially restricts my scope of practice. I maintain licenses in DC, Oregon, Washington, and California; in all four of those jurisdictions I hold prescriptive rights. I can see daily the difference in outcomes for peri- and postmenopausal patients in Maryland, where despite over 140 hours in pharmaceutical training, I cannot prescribe hormone replacement therapy, as compared to in those other jurisdictions, where I can alleviate menopausal symptoms, protect bone density and mental health, and reduce risk of cardiovascular disease.

Patients and their NDs must manage a complex web of referrals to access supportive and sometimes urgently needed prescriptions. And then there are everyday needs for adjusting preventive treatments such as antihypertensives - routine scope of practice in other states - but for Marylanders this requires laborious navigation of a healthcare maze.

Effectively, Maryland has licensed NDs to diagnose our patients but not to treat them when pharmaceuticals are indicated. As NDs, we are trained to utilize the least invasive modality that is safe, effective, and appropriate for the patient. Licensing us to prescribe medications will not dramatically increase the number of prescriptions our patients are taking; rather, it will streamline healthcare access and improve outcomes. Just last week I spoke to an ND in California who yearns to return home to Howard County but is reluctant to do so until she can practice to the scope of her training. This call was not an anomaly. The bill before you removes an unfounded barrier which will improve healthcare for Marylanders and enable more licensed NDs to return home to serve their communities.

Thank you.