

February 28, 2025

Position: Support HB 867

Madam Chair, members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Dr. Andrew Wong, I am a board-certified internal medicine physician, a graduate of Tufts University School of Medicine, who completed my internship and residency at Georgetown University Hospital in Washington, DC. Over the past 17 years, I have been in clinical practice as a hospitalist and primary care physician at Johns Hopkins, at a non-profit medical center, and now at my own private practice in Potomac, Maryland, where I still practice primary care and integrative medicine. I am also fellowship-trained in integrative medicine from the University of Arizona, and a medical acupuncturist certified by the Maryland Board of Medicine.

I have a deep knowledge of the naturopathic medical profession, having directly worked with naturopathic doctors as co-workers, as a naturopathic medicine residency director, and as a direct supervisor, over the past 14 years. **I will attest that naturopathic doctors are highly trained and science-based in their fields, and are especially strong in preventative medicine, reproductive medicine, and women's health care.** They understand when to recommend prescription medications, when to consider natural therapies and lifestyle counseling, and when to consult with their allopathic specialist colleagues. In my experience, naturopathic doctors synthesize and utilize the best available evidence and clinical knowledge to make informed recommendations about prescriptions to patients. I am especially impressed with my naturopathic colleagues' grasp of the supporting medical literature, their deep understanding of the physiological mechanisms, benefits and potential side effects of medications, and their knowledge of the relevant potential interactions between drugs and supplements. However, right now, in Maryland when my naturopathic colleagues need to prescribe something - for instance, prucalopride for gut motility - they must also refer to me for an extra consult, which presents time, effort and financial barriers to care. I believe we want to simplify the system and allow providers to operate at the top of their licenses, and that includes adding prescribing rights for naturopathic physicians.

I am in strong support of this legislation, in order to improve access to preventive and integrative care. Working and collaborating together, allopathic and naturopathic doctors can build a more robust healthcare system for our patients in Maryland, while maintaining safety, efficacy, and quality of patient care.

Thank you for your time and consideration.