



**SONORAN**  
**UNIVERSITY**  
OF HEALTH SCIENCES

College of  
Naturopathic  
Medicine

February 10, 2026

Delegate Heather Bagnall, Chair  
Delegate Bonnie Cullison, Vice Chair  
Health Committee  
240 / 241 Taylor House  
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Support for HB520 State Board of Physicians - Naturopathic Doctors - Scope of Practice, Renewals, and Professional Liability Insurance

Dear Chair Bagnall and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my strong support for HB520 and urge you to advance this critical legislation. As the Dean of the College of Naturopathic Medicine at Sonoran University of Health Sciences, I have firsthand knowledge of the extensive training naturopathic doctors (NDs) undergo to become highly skilled primary care providers.

Naturopathic medical education is a rigorous, four-year, in-residence medical program that integrates conventional medicine with evidence-based natural therapies. The first two years focus on a strong biomedical foundation—including anatomy, biochemistry, physiology, and immunology—alongside clinical and laboratory diagnosis. Our therapeutic training emphasizes prevention and includes instruction in natural medicine modalities such as herbal medicine, lifestyle medicine, and nutrition, in addition to pharmaceuticals. This dual training allows NDs to safely prescribe and adjust medications while identifying potential interactions between conventional and naturopathic treatments. NDs are also uniquely trained to recognize drug-drug, drug-herb, and drug-nutrient interactions. Graduates must pass two national licensing examinations to demonstrate their competency as primary care providers.

Our program includes over 1,200 hours of direct patient care at our two on-site clinics—one specializing in non-opioid pain management—as well as seven community health clinics. With this level of education and clinical experience, naturopathic doctors are well-qualified to prescribe medications safely and effectively. Passing HB520 will ensure that trained, licensed, naturopathic doctors can offer more effective care to Marylanders.

I appreciate your leadership and respectfully urge your support for HB520. Please feel free to contact me if I can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jessica Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J" and "M".

Jessica Mitchell, ND FABNP  
Dean, College of Naturopathic Medicine  
Sonoran University of Health Sciences