

## Developing Core Competencies for Naturopathic Medicine Programs in North America: AANMC Core Competencies of the Graduating Naturopathic Student

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### Abstract

Naturopathic medicine is defined as a primary health care profession that focuses on the holistic diagnosis and management of disease and dysfunction through the utilization of natural therapies that support the self-healing capabilities of the human body. With the consistent growth of public interest in complementary and alternative medicine, the profile of naturopathic medicine has developed and expanded over the past half century. Naturopathic practitioners are currently involved in primary care practices, integrative care teams and other aspects of health care systems in North America. As such, the seven accredited institutions of naturopathic medicine recognized the need to develop a set of universally accepted core competencies for the graduating naturopathic student. In 2012 the Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical College's (AANMC) Council of Chief Academic and Clinical Officers (CCACO), which is comprised of the educational administrative teams from the seven representative institutions, convened to develop these competencies, with the intent of guiding naturopathic medical programs and opening future access of medical physicians to the growing opportunities in health care. In addition to the providing the AANMC adopted competency document, the accompanying article discusses the competencies and the working group's process of developing them, along with methods of application, assessment and obstacles to implementation.

**Keywords:** Natural therapies and alternative medicine.

### Article

Naturopathic medicine is defined as a primary health care profession that focuses on the holistic diagnosis and management of disease and dysfunction through the utilization of natural therapies that support the self-healing capabilities of the human body. Naturopathic doctors are guided by six principles, expanding on the fundamental principles and philosophies of medicine articulated by Hippocrates, which center around the concepts of holism—addressing the physical, psychological and spiritual aspects of illness—the healing power within biological entities and directing therapeutic applications at the root cause of illness [Association

of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges, 2014]. The Principles of Naturopathic Medicine are [American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, 2011]:

- To do no harm
- To cooperate with the healing power of nature
- To treat the underlying cause of disease
- To treat the whole person
- To teach the patient the principles of healthy living
- To emphasize preventative medicine

These principles form the backbone of the practice of naturopathic medicine and distinguish the profession among other health practices, complementary and conventional, while still providing familiar touchstones to the general principles and values of health care.

Naturopathic medicine has its origins in traditional healing practices that were systematized into what was termed 'Nature Cure' by European practitioners of the healing arts. As an organized profession in North America, naturopathic medicine has seen peaks and nadirs over its history, from its introduction by Benedict Lust at the turn of the twentieth century to its modern resurgence in the 1970's. As of 2014, there were seven accredited institutions of naturopathic medicine operating out of eight campuses in North America. At least two emerging schools of naturopathic medicine were seeking accreditation through the Council for Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME), which sets standards for accreditation and assesses the quality of education at accredited institutions. With this backdrop, CCACO, which is a representative group of education administrators from the seven accredited naturopathic institutions, embarked upon creation of the expected competencies for the graduating naturopathic student.

The use of competency-based education and assessment in medical curricula was implemented on a wide scale in Canada with the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeon's CanMEDs Framework of essential physician competencies in 1996 [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, 2014] and followed in the U.S. with the creation of the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education's (ACGME) Outcomes Project in 1998 [Swing SR, 2010]. The aim of these initiatives was to improve the outcomes of medical education and address the call for greater public accountability from the medical profession [Batalden P, Swing S, Leach D, Dreyfus H, Dreyfus S, 2002]. CCACO, a council of the AANMC, had previously created a competency document for naturopathic practitioners in 2007, the Professional Competency Profile [Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges, 2007], with the desired purpose to similarly delineate the expected knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of the Naturopathic profession. The competency profile created and endorsed by the AANMC was a significant step in codifying and communicating competencies for the naturopathic profession. However, a specific mandate for adoption and utilization of the competencies in the established educational programs was absent, nor was the competency profile supported by instruction for their implementation into a naturopathic program. As a result, and because the Professional Competency Profile was created for the experienced naturopathic doctor, not the naturopathic student, the competencies exerted minor influence on reshaping the existing naturopathic programs. Further, the competencies did not speak to the experienced practitioner of naturopathic medicine, due to poor dissemination of the document and a perceived lack of relevance to the practitioner.

### ***Developing the Competencies***

In August of 2012, CCACO members approved the development of a new set of naturopathic clinical competencies that would address several areas of need that the Professional Competency Profile was unable to address: 1) establishing clinical competencies for the graduating naturopathic student; 2) providing a unified vision of competency expectations around which the educational institutions could develop appropriate curriculum and assessment; 3) communicating the training expectations of naturopathic doctors to institutions, government and the public; 4) supporting jurisdictional licensure, insurance coverage and credentialing of naturopathic doctors. A formal proposal for the development of ND competencies was submitted to the AANMC board in March 2013.

With AANMC acceptance and funding of the proposal, the CCACO competency task force sought experts in the area of competency development, contracting Meaningful Measurement, Inc. to facilitate the process. Naturopathic competencies from all accredited institutions of naturopathic medicine were then collected and systematically collated by the group. The AANMC prepared background documentation not only on naturopathic medical education, but also on standards of competency documents for other healthcare professions in North America and created an initial working document for CCACO to review. In July of 2013 the CCACO competency task force convened with facilitators from Meaningful Measurement, Inc. for a two-day intensive workshop to organize a new competency framework and elaborate on existing competencies. The meeting produced a broad document that was the outline for further refinement. From August 2013 to February 2014 a smaller working group of CCACO members and the AANMC Executive Director convened over more than a dozen telephone conferences to edit and refine the competencies. A final draft of the competency document was approved by the AANMC Board in February 2014 and presented to the CNME for comment in May 2014.

Stakeholders in both Canada and the United States were then engaged to provide commentary on the competencies from May to July 2014, via the Naturopathic Coordinating Council, a conglomerate of North American representative naturopathic organizations and leaders from the accredited educational institutions. In August of 2014, stakeholder comments were reviewed by the full CCACO group at their bi-annual general meeting in Phoenix, AZ; changes were incorporated into the competency document, when appropriate. Coinciding with the conference of the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians and the AANMC Annual General Meeting, the draft competency document was provided further exposure to the naturopathic community. The final competency document, *AANMC Core Competencies of the Graduating Naturopathic Student*, was formally accepted and adopted on October 16, 2014 (see Appendix 1 for full document). As a final action, CCACO resolved to establish a subcommittee for solicitation and analysis of feedback from core stakeholders, including the educational institutions, by 2016. As a living document, the competencies will be reviewed and revised by CCACO starting in 2017, for eventual release in 2019.

### ***About the competencies***

The 2007 iteration of the Naturopathic Professional Competency Profile took its structural influence from the CanMEDS Roles, establishing five competency roles for naturopathic practitioners: Naturopathic Medical Expert, Naturopathic Health Advocate, Naturopathic Manager, Naturopathic Health Scholar and Naturopathic Professional. With creation of the graduate core competencies, several models were considered: the CanMEDS Roles structure, competency categories based on the naturopathic principles, and the ACGME competencies. Ultimately, seven competency categories, most closely resembling the ACGME competencies, were selected for their clarity of purpose. They represent the breadth of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values espoused by naturopathic medicine and expected of its graduating students. The competencies are: Medical Assessment and Diagnosis; Patient Management; Communication and Collaboration; Professionalism; Practice Management; Systems Based Practice; and Practice Based Learning, Research and Scholarship.

The sub-competencies delineated within the competency document echo those shared with other health care professions, but contain enabling competencies unique to naturopathic medicine. These specific sub-competencies are listed by competency category below:

**Medical Assessment and Diagnosis.** This competency encompasses the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary to make a comprehensive assessment of the patient, allowing for an accurate and holistic diagnosis. Notably, performance of a *functional health assessment*, in contrast to an assessment of pathology, is an emphasized aspect of the assessment competencies. The functional assessment focuses on metabolic parameters influenced by environment, psycho-spiritual and genetic factors, and is core to the principles of naturopathic medicine. It focuses on the assessment of dysfunction, rather than disease and represents an important aspect of preventative health assessment.

**Patient Management.** Navigating the abundance of information on health care options and therapies employed by naturopathic doctors presents a potentially confounding array of choice to the patient

[Eysenbach G, Jadad AR, 2001]. Further, individuals may be hesitant to report adverse reactions to natural health products to their health care providers, which speaks to a larger issue of trust in health care [Walji R, Boon H, Barnes J, Austin Z, Welsh S, Baker G. 2010]. Providing the best information to patients is a skill that requires specific training [Woolf SH, Chan EC, Harris R, Sheridan SL, Braddock CH 3<sup>rd</sup>, Kaplan RM, Krist A, O'Connor AM, Tunis S, 2005][ Lee RC, Donaldson C, Cook LS, 2003]. Emphasis of this competency is placed upon evidence-informed care that considers all aspects of the patient's situation. Selection of appropriate treatments is predicated upon an informed decision-making process involving the practitioner, patient and any other individuals significant to the care process.

**Communication and Collaboration.** Two connected roles are developed in the communication and collaboration competency: the naturopathic doctor as effective communicator with patients and their families, and the naturopathic doctor as integrative collaborator in patient care. Both are essential to the model of patient-centered care, set as a standard of high quality health care in the Institute of Medicine's 2001 report, *Crossing the Quality Chasm* [Institute of Medicine Committee on Quality of Health Care in America, 2001]. The naturopathic physician is tasked with attaining the competencies necessary to successfully navigate the complex terrain of conventional and complementary health care providers for the betterment of their patients. Further, the naturopathic principle of *Docere* (Doctor as Teacher) is represented in the imperative to educate patients, health care providers and the community to the role of naturopathic doctors can play in the health care system.

**Professionalism.** In the charter written by the Medical Professionalism Project, *Medical Professionalism in the New Millennium* [Project of the ABIM Foundation, ACP-ASIM Foundation, and European Federation of Internal Medicine, 2002], editor of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, Harold Sox, MD, introduces the document with the statement, "changes in the health care delivery systems in countries throughout the industrialized world threaten the values of professionalism." The threat to professionalism in naturopathic care is no less acute, with naturopathic physicians contending with similar corporate and economic influences as those encountered by allopathic physicians. This competency speaks to the continuing need to develop and teach principles of professionalism in naturopathic institutes of learning and firmly entrench professionalism into the core of naturopathic practice.

**Career Development and Practice Management.** Supporting practice and professional development are ongoing priorities for the expanding landscape of the naturopathic profession. Along with the efforts of national and jurisdictional organizations, the core competencies emphasize the need to develop appropriate skills and abilities necessary to successfully manage a naturopathic practice. No less secondary are competencies in career development in areas outside the standard patient care model, such as research or governmental affairs.

**Systems Based Practice.** Closely modeled on the eponymous ACGME core competency, systems based practice requires an awareness and responsiveness to the larger health care system and context. In 2010 the Academic Consortium for Complementary and Alternative Health Care (ACCAHC) advanced its competencies for integrative healthcare that addresses complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and conventional collaborative practice competencies [Goldblatt E, Wiles M, Schwartz J, Weeks J, 2013]. This core competency reiterates for naturopathic medicine, the charge to become integral partners in integrative health care teams and networks.

**Practice Based Learning, Research, and Scholarship.** The seventh core competency of the naturopathic graduate emphasizes that the principles of evidence-informed practice—the incorporation of best evidence, clinical experience and patient motivations into making appropriate clinical decisions—must be core to the practice of naturopathic medicine [Behrman A, Bracken MB, Comerford B, Girard C, Goodman J, Katz DL, Williams AL, 2003]. It is especially significant in the face of skepticism and scrutiny of CAM-based therapies that its practitioners are able to critically appraise various sources of evidence and apply to practice. Education in CAM research and evidence-based medicine is developing across the naturopathic institutions, with programs like the Evidence Based Medicine Workshop at National College of Natural Medicine

(NCNM), which trains faculty from NCNM and other institutions in the principles and practice of evidence-based medicine [Zwickey H, 2014].

No less critical to the self-regulation of professional naturopathic doctors is the imperative to continue life-long practice improvement through reflective learning. The competencies outlining reflective practice and life-long learning are similar to those espoused in other health care competency statements. The competencies are a call to promote the skill and practice of reflective learning at every step of training, with mentored or guided reflection as an essential component of educational programs [Sandars J, 2009].

### **Assessment of Competencies in Naturopathic Students and Graduates**

The competencies were designed for the naturopathic teaching institutions to individualize to their programs; implementation of assessment for competency achievement is up to the individual schools. However, CCACO has plans to support competency assessment through development of guidelines for utilizing the best assessment tools; those that are most valid, reliable and feasible for individual competency areas. There is much established literature in this area already, including guides from ACGME and The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, which support medical school assessment of student competency achievement [Swing SR, Clyman SG, Holmboe ES, Williams RG, 2009] [Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, 2006]. Effective assessment tools will be those that are cost effective, relatively easy to implement, with high reliability and validity. Further, assessment tools should be designed for collection and collation of results data to support institutional research and programmatic evaluation, so that assessment results can be reflected back to program improvement. Tools and techniques to assess a student's attainment of the core competencies may include simulations such as objective structured clinical examinations (OSCE), clinical evaluation exercises, patient health outcomes, patient and faculty feedback, reflective portfolios, guided observation by faculty, and research assignments. Training of faculty in the implementation of assessment tools to measure student achievement of the core competencies must be an essential and ongoing aspect of this process.

### **Obstacles to Implementing the Core Competencies**

While the competencies were developed by the education program administrators from all the North American accredited schools of naturopathic medicine with the expressed purpose of informing their programs with universally regarded knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, weaving them into the various programs may present several obstacles. Naturopathic programs receive no public funding in the United States or Canada; resource allocation will be necessary to make significant program changes and support faculty development and protected teaching time. Each institution must secure revenue and resources to support implementation of the competencies into the program.

Faculty support of the competencies is essential to their effective implementation and impact on the programs. As with the previous Professional Competency Profile, if there is little faculty buy-in and training, the competencies will languish into insignificance. Robust training of faculty and, in turn, the student population, must accompany instillation of the competencies into the individual programs.

Certain competencies require the development of programmatic activities in those areas, to various degrees at the naturopathic institutions. For instance, collaborative and systems-based practices may be in nascent states of development at various institutions. Evidence-based practice is also an area that will require specific focus at the naturopathic schools, within the academic and clinical programs and in the training of current and future faculty. Both these areas are critically important to the future presence of naturopaths on the main stage of national health care programs. Barriers to the successful implementation of training and education in these competency areas include revenue and resource shortfalls. Further, the ideological gap between conventional and complementary medicine practices and practitioners may block effective communication and collaboration for patient care and inter-professional advancement. Thankfully, progression in inter-professional collaboration and education has been advancing from organizations, such as ACCAHC and the IN-CAM Research Network.

Finally, the competencies successful integration into naturopathic programs will primarily affect the practices of current and future students and faculty. Broader acceptance of the core competencies for graduates must be disseminated to and accepted by independent naturopathic practitioners, which currently represent the majority of professionals. This will require national and jurisdictional institutions, like the AANMC, the CNME, the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) and the Canadian Association of Naturopathic Doctors (CAND) to support and promote the core competencies.

## **Conclusion**

The naturopathic medical profession is poised to play a greater role in healthcare across North America; its unique set of principles and eclectic scope of practice lend its practitioners to lead roles in complementary and interdisciplinary care. Medical institutions and governmental regulation call for uniformity in training competencies of naturopathic doctors. For naturopathic medicine programs and practitioners to interact significantly in the current model of patient-centered care, demonstration of graduate proficiency in the core competencies of naturopathic programs is essential. The approved “AANMC Professional Competencies of the Graduating Naturopathic Physician” document follows.

## AANMC Core Competencies of the Graduating Naturopathic Student

### Introduction

Naturopathic Medicine is a distinct primary health care profession that combines the traditions of natural healing with the rigors of modern science.<sup>1</sup> Naturopathic physicians are trained as primary care providers who diagnose, treat and manage patients with acute and chronic conditions, while addressing disease and dysfunction at the levels of body, mind and spirit. They concentrate on whole patient wellness through health promotion and disease prevention, attempting to find the underlying cause of the patient's condition. Naturopathic physicians care for patients of all ages and genders. They provide individualized evidence-informed therapies that balance the least harmful and most effective approaches to help facilitate the body's inherent ability to restore and maintain optimal health.

A resurgence of interest in naturopathic medicine in North America in the 1970s resulted in rapid growth and maturation of the naturopathic profession to where it is today. As of 2014 there are seven institutions of higher learning offering naturopathic degrees in eight locations across North America. The Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) is the accrediting body for these programs. Graduates of CNME accredited naturopathic medical programs receive a Naturopathic Doctoral designation (ND) and are eligible to sit for the Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Examination (NPLEX).

The Association of Accredited Naturopathic Medical Colleges (AANMC) and its Council of Chief Academic and Clinical Officers (CCACO), recognized the need for agreement among the AANMC member schools on clinical expectations for graduates of CNME accredited naturopathic medical programs. As such, CCACO and AANMC embarked on examination of current clinical expectations and the creation of a unified baseline for clinical competency of the naturopathic medical graduate. In August of 2012, CCACO agreed to embark on the creation of naturopathic clinical competencies for the accredited institutions. In July 2013, academic and clinical deans from each CNME accredited institution met together and developed a draft document, after which time CCACO convened a taskforce of representatives from the accredited naturopathic medical programs and the executive director of AANMC. This subgroup met regularly for six months, and received input from CCACO, stakeholders and advisors in the broader medical and educational communities to create the first draft of the naturopathic clinical competency document. The document then received input from the naturopathic community and final approval from CCACO and the AANMC Board of Directors. The following report constitutes consensus on clinical competencies for the naturopathic medical graduate. The purpose of the document is to provide the core competencies of a graduate from an accredited naturopathic doctoral program in order to align curriculum, define expectations of graduates and educate all stakeholders regarding the practice of naturopathic medicine. The expectation is that this document will serve to guide current and future programs of naturopathic medical education.

### Core Principles

**The practice of naturopathic medicine is guided by six core principles, as defined by American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP).**

**First Do No Harm (Primum Non Nocere):** The naturopathic physician follows three guidelines to avoid harming the patient:

- Uses methods and medicinal substances which minimize the risk of harmful side effects;
- Uses the least force necessary to diagnose and treat; avoid when possible the harmful suppression of symptoms; and
- Acknowledges, respects, and works with individuals' self-healing process.

**The Healing Power of Nature (Vis Medicatrix Naturae):** The naturopathic physician recognizes an inherent self-healing process in people that is ordered and intelligent. The naturopathic physician acts to identify and

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<sup>1</sup> *House of Delegates Position Paper, American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (Amended 2011)*  
*"What is a Naturopathic Doctor", American Association of Naturopathic Physicians*

remove obstacles to healing and recovery, and to facilitate and augment this inherent self-healing process.

**Identify and Treat the Causes (Tolle Causam):** The naturopathic physician seeks to identify and remove the underlying cause(s) of illness rather than to merely eliminate or suppress symptoms.

**Doctor as Teacher (Docere):** The naturopathic physician educates patients and encourages self-responsibility for health. The physician also recognizes and employs the therapeutic potential of the doctor-patient relationship.

**Treat the Whole Person:** The naturopathic physician treats each patient by taking into account individual physical, mental, emotional, genetic, environmental, social, and other factors. Since total health also includes spiritual health, the naturopathic physician encourages individuals to pursue their personal spiritual development.

**Prevention:** The naturopathic physician emphasizes the prevention of disease by assessing risk factors, heredity and susceptibility to disease, and by making appropriate interventions in partnership with the patient to prevent illness.

### **The Seven Areas of Competence for the Naturopathic Medical Graduate:**

- Medical Assessment and Diagnosis
- Patient Management
- Communication and Collaboration
- Professionalism
- Practice Management
- System Based Practice
- Practice Based Learning, Research and Scholarship

### **Medical Assessment and Diagnosis**

Naturopathic medical graduates conduct a complete and accurate history, physical exam and objective assessment, to arrive at a diagnosis. They demonstrate the knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes expected of a naturopathic physician within the context of a patient-centered model.

The naturopathic medical graduate:

Elicits a complete and accurate medical and biopsychosocial history

- Establishes a therapeutic doctor-patient relationship
- Demonstrates active listening when taking a history and performing a physical exam
- Assesses the determinants of health
- Documents the medical record consistent with legal, institutional, and ethical requirements

Performs a complete and accurate health examination, including pathological and functional assessment

- Selects assessments and performs procedures based on a risk benefit analysis
- Performs appropriate system-specific or hypothesis driven examination based on patient presentation
- Performs health screenings for disease prevention and early diagnosis
- Orders and/or performs appropriate diagnostic tests and imaging studies
- Conducts rapid assessment in emergent situations
- Performs assessments mindful of personal biases and cultural, ethnic and racial awareness of patients

Formulates an accurate medical diagnosis

- Interprets results for laboratory tests, physical examination, imaging studies, and other diagnostic tests
- Integrates the medical history, physical examination and diagnostic testing with naturopathic principles in formulating a diagnosis
  - Applies critical thinking and clinical reasoning to the synthesis of a medical diagnosis
  - Identifies emergent and life-threatening situations and diagnoses
  - Communicates assessment findings and diagnosis with the patient as appropriate

### **Patient Management**

Naturopathic medical graduates provide personalized, compassionate, ethical, holistic patient care. Interventions are determined using the following criteria: least harmful, most effective, best evidence, and most individually appropriate in promoting patient health and prevention of disease.

The naturopathic medical graduate:

Establishes therapeutic relationships with patients

- Builds and maintains rapport in patient interactions
- Displays empathy in patient interactions
- Respects doctor/patient roles and responsibilities
- Actively collaborates with patient's health goal-setting

Develops an individualized treatment plan based on diagnosis and consistent with naturopathic principles

- Incorporates cultural and psychosocial issues
- Uses best practices and best available evidence
- Focuses on safe, natural medical care
- Emphasizes health promotion and illness prevention
- Considers the safety, efficacy, contraindications, actions and interactions of therapies
- Fosters patient adherence through consideration of the patient's circumstances, resources and ability to implement the plan
- Addresses physical, spiritual, mental and emotional aspects of the patient

Recommends and/or administers therapies used in the individualized care of patients, including but not limited to:

- Botanical medicine
- Counseling (e.g., lifestyle counseling, health psychology, mind-body medicine)
- Homeopathic medicine
- Medical office therapeutic procedures (e.g. IV therapy, injections, minor surgery)
- Clinical Nutrition (e.g., dietary counseling and nutraceuticals)
- Pharmaceuticals
- Physical medicine (e.g., manipulation, electrotherapies, and hydrotherapy)

Facilitates informed patient decisions by presenting evidence-informed therapeutic and wellness options including risks, benefits and alternatives to therapies

- Engages patients in establishing a long-term focus for their personal health management with an emphasis on prevention and wellness
- Provides counseling and support for patients, their families, and significant others related to chronic illness, acute illness and end of life issues
- Recommends plan for follow up care
- Reassesses treatment plans considering clinical outcomes, best practices and patient needs
- Documents plan of care and revisions to plan of care

- Recognizes personal limitations, adheres to scope of practice and makes referrals when appropriate
- Intervenes and/or refers in urgent and emergent care situations

### **Communication and Collaboration**

Naturopathic medical graduates communicate effectively to optimize patient relationships and patient care. They refer, consult and collaborate with other health professionals as appropriate when providing care.

The naturopathic medical graduate:

Communicates effectively with patients, and when appropriate their families and significant others

- Describes succinctly what naturopathic medicine is, and the role and responsibilities of naturopathic physicians
- Analyzes the patient narrative
- Communicates findings with patient

Educates patients regarding their diagnosis and prognosis

- Provides counsel on treatment options
- Promotes treatment plan adherence to achieve therapeutic goals

Demonstrates empathy, compassion, and objectivity in patient interactions

- Demonstrates sensitivity and respect for cultural identity including, but not limited to, age, sex, race, ethnicity, disability, religion, social status, gender identity, and sexual orientation
- Utilizes appropriate resources when experiencing barriers to communication

Consults with and/or refers to other health care professionals when care is outside of scope of practice or personal competence

- Conveys effective oral and written communication to other medical professionals
- Collaborates as a member of the patient's health care team to provide safe and effective care

Educates members of the patient's health care team regarding the role of naturopathic medicine and the naturopathic physician in patient care

- Recognizes and respects the roles and responsibilities of other professionals within the health care team.
- Collaborates as a member of the health care community to address public health issues such as access to care
- Provides leadership in the incorporation of the naturopathic physician as an integral member of the health care community
- Promotes naturopathic medicine and principles to the community at large

### **Professionalism**

Naturopathic medical graduates demonstrate professional behavior, personal integrity, and altruism. They are aware of their limitations in expertise, operate within the jurisdictional scope of practice, and refer care when appropriate. They exemplify the principles of naturopathic medicine personally and professionally as health care professionals and leaders in the community.

The naturopathic medical graduate:

Maintains legal and ethical standards, including but not limited to

- Patient confidentiality
- Informed consent
- Documentation of care
- Scope of practice

- Mandatory reporting
- Professional boundaries
- Conflicts of interest

Demonstrates respect and integrity in professional interactions

- Fulfills professional commitments in a timely and responsible manner
- Provides and receives constructive feedback as a part of peer and self-evaluation of professional competence
- Recognizes and addresses ethical issues arising in practice
- Practices in a manner consistent with the words and spirit of the Naturopathic Oath
- Demonstrates a commitment to balancing patient care, self-care, and responsibilities to colleagues, community, family and friends
- Mentors members of the profession

### **Practice Management**

Naturopathic medical graduates are able to establish and maintain a viable naturopathic practice.

The naturopathic medical graduate:

Creates a realistic business plan

- Applies basic principles of marketing towards the establishment and growth of a patient base
- Adheres to best practices in management standards including financial practices, negotiation, inventory and business
- Demonstrates the ability to plan and manage time and resources
- Maintains a professional network
- Promotes practice and relationships through effective public and professional communications
- Identifies and responds to practice challenges and opportunities
- Participates in continuous quality assessment and improvement
- Demonstrates key leadership attributes in practice management

### **Systems Based Practice**

Naturopathic medical graduates demonstrate an awareness of the developing role of naturopathic medicine within larger frameworks of health care and health care systems in order to advocate for optimal patient care.

The naturopathic medical graduate:

Demonstrates a working understanding of available health care resources, both conventional and complementary, in order to address patient and community needs

Influences community or population health through education, community initiatives and other efforts to shape public and professional health care policy

Demonstrates an ability to participate effectively within a health care team with respect to referral skills, collaboration and co-management of care

Practices cost-effective health care through evidence-informed management, preventive strategies and lifestyle management with an aim at alleviating the overall health care burden

### **Practice Based Learning, Research, and Scholarship**

Naturopathic medical graduates critically appraise, assimilate and apply scientific evidence to improve patient care. They demonstrate an understanding of the strengths and limitations of research. Naturopathic graduates are dedicated to ongoing personal reflection and lifelong learning.

The naturopathic medical graduate:

Applies the skills of evidence-informed practice to patient care:

- Formulates a clinical research question to guide the design of the information search, using the principles and tools of evidence-based medicine
- Conducts a literature search efficiently, accessing appropriate resources in order to answer clinical questions
- Demonstrates an understanding of statistical tools
- Critically appraises relevant data to make judgments in integrating the information into clinical practice
- Applies levels of evidence in application and selection of therapeutics and patient management
- Critically evaluates patient care outcomes with respect to qualitative and quantitative measurements
- Advances the practice of naturopathic medicine through contributions to the development and dissemination of new knowledge

Demonstrates reflective practice in a commitment to lifelong learning

- Recognizes limitations in his/her own knowledge, skills, and attitudes
- Assesses professional competence using self-awareness, feedback from others and reflection on practice
- Demonstrates commitment to maintaining and improving knowledge, skills, and attitudes

***\*\*\* Use of the term physician may vary based on jurisdictional legislation***

## Notes on Contributors

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