

BC's Conversation on Health
still time to get involved
see back cover for info

from the British Columbia Naturopathic Association

Your Health

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Health Care Coverage: The BCNA Viewpoint

The BCNA supports the principle of universal health care. However, the current system requires a perpetually escalating budget, which is applied without consideration for value or benefit and without any demonstrable improvement in health care services. This system is in need of revision.

We are opposed to simply funding the existing system without serious consideration of many valuable alternatives and a review of the effectiveness of many conventional practices currently funded by government. We believe that patients should be made aware of the cost of medical care by receiving a statement indicating the fees paid by government. And we are opposed to the systemic discrimination against complementary medicine, which ignores its benefits to public health care and savings to the government.

We believe, in an ideal government system, patient choice, a focus on preventive medicine, and benefits to citizens who take steps to improve their overall health, must be core values.

Naturopathic medicine is focussed on core values that benefit society as a whole. The principles of naturopathic medicine enable patients to enhance the quality of their life—if not longevity—while reducing strain on an over-burdened health care system. In addition, the practice of naturopathic medicine is compatible with and

supports current scientific, social and cultural norms. A healthy population is less of a financial drain on our society, and healthy people can make more of a positive contribution.

We believe the current system discriminates against preventive medicine. This discrimination occurs against the patient, the naturopathic doctor, and the taxpayer in general. The ND, for example, cannot gain access to publicly funded and privately owned medical labs, prescribe simple items for which they have been trained and educated to use—and for which they can use in other jurisdictions. Neither can they attend to existing patients admitted to a hospital or care facility or refer to specialists. And all of these constraints are in place even without a demand for universal coverage.

The patient is also discriminated against as they pay into a system they don't use, pay after-tax dollars to see an ND without tax benefits, and alleviate health budgets overall by placing less stress on the burdened MD system—without compensation.

Although we would expect the government to encourage the use of ND care by contributing toward ND services, testing and therapies, it is ultimately the individual's responsibility to make the efforts to improve their health. No government or practitioner can force a patient to eat healthier foods, exercise more or provide the motivation to improve their overall

health. Given that harsh reality, if the government, as they state, truly seeks to incorporate prevention in the health care system they absolutely must in some way reward individuals for making healthy choices. In the case of seeing an ND, they could subsidize consultations, as they did in BC until 2002, and allow for 100% tax deductions for testing and therapeutics.

The BCNA also recognizes that although all citizens should have access to ND care, many lower income, mentally incompetent and/or physically challenged persons do not have their basic needs met regarding housing, hygiene, quality food, social and family support, as well as needed social and psychological services. It would be unrealistic to expect a few visits to an ND to remedy problems that have a much deeper social origin; incorporating the knowledge and expertise of NDs into the health care system, the way other health professionals are involved in hospitals

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Privatization: Boon or Bane?

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and care facilities, would be of enormous societal value.

We also find the historical vision for health care provided from government lacks creativity or a will to be inclusive. We feel there are many options that validate patient choice and support a more encompassing, cost-effective health system. One such solution is called a Medical Savings Account or MSA system.

The MSA system is in place in many other countries, such as Singapore and South Africa. The premise is simply that while emergency services, prenatal and postpartum care, and other essential services are protected, primary health care is delivered through a credit system. Singapore's system is specifically focussed on complementary programs designed to promote individual responsibility, protect the poor and address potential market failures.

Credits are provided on each taxpayer's government health card annually, based on taxes paid for health care and, in the case of employed individuals, an employer portion. The patient may use their credits at any licensed health care provider in the province. In addition, for those individuals who don't use all their credits up, all, or a substantial portion of those credits carry over into future years.

The credits system encourages patients to take control of their health, become informed of the actual cost of their medical care, to value and appreciate the cost of health care (whether it's provided by an MD, ND or other practitioner), and to reward those patients who seek to improve their overall health. The system also spreads out health care usage, alleviating stresses on emergency rooms, lessening the need for additional GPs, and providing taxpayers choice in how they utilize their tax care dollars.

In conclusion, the naturopathic profession has much to offer the public health care system, in the areas in which government is expressing interest. Naturopathic physicians can alleviate the shortage of primary care GPs. NDs have knowledge and expertise in the area of preventative medicine and their methods of treatment are cost-saving and effective. We believe it is time that the skills, experience and vision of naturopathic medicine be considered as a valuable contribution to any discussion on the future of health care planning in British Columbia.



the public view?

In the wake of the public Conversation on Health forums across the country, many individuals have expressed strong opinions on the status quo in healthcare. One point raised by a reader writing to the Sun was that, contrary to the health minister's claims, there are many "magic bullets" to resolve the current health care crises. One was "introduce monetary incentives to persuade everyone to foster good health and use the health care system more wisely."

Another writer expressed even stronger opinions, claiming that the current public health care system is a monopoly, which neither serves the taxpayer or the sick with efficiency. He wrote that "Canada has one of the most expensive health care systems in the world, but our waiting rooms are full and our doctors run ragged.

"On average, a doctor sees each patient for about five minutes, according to one estimate.

"A telling statistic put out by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development is that Canada ranks 27th out of 30 countries, with just 2.1 doctors per 1000 population. Only Japan, Mexico and Korea have fewer doctors per unit of population.

"Four million Canadians are unable to get a family doctor.

"Perhaps doctors have all been frightened away by the conditions prevailing in our public service.

"Perhaps some would rather work full time in their particular field instead of being frustrated by government-rationed health care, achieved by withholding hospital facilities. Maybe this explains why there's a great exodus of doctors south.

"Socialized health care is a single overworked government machine in the hands of incompetents compared to a multiplicity of privately owned machines in the hands of professionals.

"Private medicine introduces competition, driving efficiency and lower costs. In socialized medicine, doctors—along with other government employees—have to form a union bloc to extort contracts from a government that knows it has no alternative but to pay or risk shutting down the entire health care system.

"Government overcomes this obstacle by raising taxes.

"Government bureaucrats interfere with doctors' professional opinions, and even amend their prescriptions by substituting cheaper drugs.

"Many Canadians still think the world would fall off its axis if private medicine was allowed to enter the health care equation.

"They are wrong."

Dr. Joseph Boucher was a fundamental force in naturopathic medicine in the Pacific Northwest. He was a doctor and teacher, leaving a lasting impression on his patients, many colleagues and associates. He was one of the founders of the National College of Naturopathic Medicine in Portland, the oldest naturopathic college in North America. He served on NCNM's board for 28 years, and was also a teacher at the college. He was very involved in supporting the profession in BC, serving in various capacities on the BC regulatory board. He was also a teacher at the Ontario naturopathic college.

His name lives on in many ways. BC's only naturopathic college is named after him: The Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine, in New Westminster (www.binm.org). Also, in 1988, a group of doctors began a charitable foundation, in his memory, to support students of naturopathic medicine. That charitable organization is now called the Canadian Naturopathic Foundation or CNF.

The CNF is the only foundation of its sort in North America. It disburses grants to third- and fourth-year Canadian students enrolled at any of the accredited naturopathic medical colleges. One of the CNF grants is specifically called the Dr. Joseph Boucher scholarship. Between 1988 and 2002 over 58 scholarships had been issued to eligible Canadian students. The CNF is also involved in research activities and public awareness campaigns.

As a registered Canadian charity, any donation or gifts to the CNF are fully tax receiptable. If you would like to make a donation towards the CNF, or for more information or a membership package, contact Dr. Gerald Farnsworth, DC, ND. Write to 196—2400 Oakdale Way, Kamloops, BC, V2P 2W7 or e-mail drgfarnsworth@shaw.ca Your interest and support is much appreciated.

For upcoming local events and seminars, link to www.bcna.ca and choose "News & Events" then "Current Events". Coming up this spring: Two BCNA members will present at the annual Wellness Show in Vancouver. On March 2, hear Dr. Danny Jui on Chronic Fatigue & Depression (call 604 697 0397 for more info). On March 4 hear Dr. Allison Patton on Infertility (call 604 538 8837 for more info). In Victoria, on March 14 hear Dr. Pamela Hutchison on Naturopathic Treatment of Anxiety (call 250 370 5641 for more info). And in Vancouver, on March 24-25, Dr. Anita Bratt is hosting an Autism/ADHD outreach clinic for patient testing. For more info call 604 736 3800.

It's estimated that the best part of a million patients are killed each year by a variety of wayward medical care in hospitals. For example, adverse drug reactions account for 106,000 deaths; medical errors 98,000; bedsores a whopping 115,000 deaths; infection 88,000; malnutrition, nearly 109,000; medical errors lead to nearly 200,000 deaths among outpatients; over 37,000 deaths from "unnecessary" procedures; and another 32,000 dead from surgery-related issues. That's 784,000 deaths, annually, which arguably could have been prevented. And that's just in the US. The cost associated with those deaths? Wait for it: \$282 billion USD annually.



But medical mistakes are just the tip of the iceberg. There is an ethic of spending money in medicine, without warrant, that perpetuates this type of care.

Want to find out more about the current state of health care in *Canada*? Health Action Network will host a special event this spring you shouldn't miss. Rafe Mair, past BC minister of health and long-time radio talk show host, will co-host. He will be joined by Don Nixdorf, a chiropractor and co-author of the recently published *Squandering Billions*.

The event is on Thursday, March 29 at 7 p.m. Contact HANS at www.hans.org or call 604 435 0512 for tickets.

10 Tips on Choosing a Naturopathic Doctor

It's the start of a brand new year and what better way to kick it off right than to focus on your health. Why, you might ask? Because feeling healthy and energetic will motivate you to be more productive and efficient in all that you do.

As a health professional, I stress the importance of having both an MD as well as naturopathic doctor (ND), in your corner. An MD is great for emergency care, prescribing drugs when necessary, and performing surgery, while your ND will work with you in optimizing your overall health and prevention of disease. NDs address the root cause(s) of your ailments using science-based therapies that are safe, gentle and effective. Unlike prescription drugs, there are no bothersome side effects with these natural treatments.

In my professional and personal life I have found many people looking for answers to their health questions—but they were unsure where to go or how to find someone that truly has the expertise to help them. While there is so much health information available nowadays, sometimes it's misleading, commercially oriented or one-sided. All too often people turn to self-prescribing after getting information from books written by those who are not educated or certified as health professionals. Some authors do not have the expertise in naturopathic treatments to write such “cookbook-like” publications and can lead the reader into ill-advised self-prescriptions. Do not make the mistake of self-prescribing! No one in their right mind would read a book on viruses or diseases and prescribe themselves a pharmaceutical drug. You simply should not attempt to be your own doctor. Case in point: many doctors see other doctors for their own ailments, so why wouldn't you?

Depending on how you wish to accomplish your health goals, knowing how your ND practices and what services he/she offers will greatly help you decide which ND is right for you.

Finding an ND is not only about the doctor's expertise; your visits to an ND will involve comprehensive assessments and extensive discussion on your health goals. Although NDs don't specialize the way MDs do—NDs are taught to focus on each individual patient's overall health, not simply a disease—many NDs do focus in certain areas. Some NDs have additional training and education in intravenous therapies, others focus on clinical nutrition (i.e., not simply changing diet for health reasons but using

food to heal). Some doctors offer physical therapies, such as manipulation, others are skilled in acupuncture. Your ND should be able to provide you with a general background on a range of complementary therapies in the same way you expect your GP to provide a range of drug knowledge.

I've created a simple ten step plan to help you find a naturopathic doctor that can provide you with the professional expertise backed by years of schooling, ongoing education, and board certification.

Step One: List your Health Goals

You must first know what you're looking for when embarking on your search. I suggest writing down a list of your health goals including your physical and mental concerns and also how you would like to go about achieving them.

For example, achieving better health can be approached in different ways. Are you open to receiving an invasive treatment, such as acupuncture, or vitamin injections? Or would you prefer non-invasive techniques, such as nutritional advice, homeopathy and botanical medicine? Perhaps you'd like someone focussed on one specific therapy or an ND offering a range of therapies.

Step Two: Verify Credentials

BC NDs are listed at www.bcna.ca with extensive “profile” information on each doctor. Doctors across Canada are listed at www.cand.ca. Doctors across the US are listed at www.naturopathic.org

An important note is that if you have extended medical coverage through your employer, you will only receive reimbursement if you see a licensed ND.

Step Three: Call Ahead for More Information

Once you've narrowed your search, call ahead and ask the receptionist to send you more information on the ND's credentials, training background and services. Many doctors have a website; if so, you may be able to get all this at your fingertips.

Remember too that the government regulates the use of reserved titles such as MD and ND. Only licensed NDs can use the title ND, naturopathic doctor or naturopathic physician. There is no such regulation for generic titles such as health practitioner or natural healers.

cont'd →

The Guiding Principles of Naturopathic Medicine

THE HEALING POWER OF NATURE

Trust in the body's inherent wisdom to heal itself.

FIRST DO NO HARM

Utilize the most natural, least invasive and least toxic therapies first.

TREAT THE WHOLE PERSON

View the body as an integrated whole in all its physical and spiritual dimensions.

IDENTIFY AND TREAT THE CAUSES

Look beyond the symptoms to effectively address the underlying cause(s) of illness.

DOCTOR AS TEACHER

Educate patients in the steps to achieving and maintaining optimal health.

PREVENTION

Focus on promoting health and wellness, and preventing disease.

Source: AANP, www.naturopathic.org

Step Four: Ask Direct Questions

If you have a specific condition that you are seeking help with, then ask the receptionist or ND directly. Some NDs have specialized training or a professional interest in issues such as, e.g., menopause, children's health, cancer or sports injuries.

Step Five: Ask About the Doctor's Fee Schedule

As with any professional, your consultation fee will vary according to the time you spend with the doctor. If one ND charges \$40 for 20 minutes and another \$80 for 40 minutes, they are in fact the same price—so ask about not only the consult fee but the time you'll spend with the doctor. Supplements and testing are additional fees; however, you will be getting appropriate product and a dosage according to your specific health needs. When considering fees remember to look at the big picture: cost versus potential gains in overall health.

Step Six: New Doctors vs. Doctors With Long-Term Experience

Many patients feel that seeing a very experienced doctor is the best route for an initial consult. It's undoubtedly true that the longer a doctor has been in practice the more clinical expertise they'll have. However, newer doctors will have an excellent grasp of recent clinical research. A new doctor building his or her practice may have longer consults. Some of the new doctors offer a free "meet the doctor" initial consult. Although it's a free visit—the ND won't diagnose or treat—you can meet the doctor one on one and get a sense of what they can offer and how they can help you.

Step Seven: Preparation & Consultation

Now that you've booked your consultation, arrive at the doctor's office prepared with a list of questions and information you'd like to ask. If you've already had extensive

tests or received treatment, bring a copy of your medical records.

Step Eight: Making An Informed Decision

When meeting with the doctor, listen to how he/she approaches your particular ailment(s) so that you can make an informed decision concerning your naturopathic treatment options. During an initial consult your ND will enquire not only about your current health issues

but your overall health and health history. Make certain that if you have any pre-existing conditions or you are currently on prescription drugs to share that information. This will minimize the risk for possible interactions with supplements.

Step Nine: Find Classes & Seminars

Inquire to find out if the ND offers classes or seminars. Many clinics regularly host information seminars or work with community groups to offer professional expertise. Attending seminars outside of clinic hours is a great way to learn more from and about your ND as well as broaden your outlook on maintaining lasting vitality.

Step Ten: Setting New Goals

Once you've achieved your health goals, set new ones. Optimum health goes beyond being disease free; it's also about preventing disease in order to maintain good health. If you have a family history of any particular illness, work with your ND to prevent this fate from happening to you and include it in your long-term health plan.

Dr. Cindy Quach practices in Port Coquitlam. She regularly hosts community talks and seminars. For more information, link to www.NaturopathicCenter.com or call her office at (604) 941-0744.

Healthy Weight Can Prevent Postmenopausal Breast Cancer

There are innumerable health benefits to reaching and maintaining a healthy weight. In addition to these known benefits, it has recently been shown that women who gain weight after menopause, and keep the weight after menopause have a greater risk of developing breast cancer. In order to decrease their risk of breast cancer, women who are approaching menopause should maintain or lose weight, as appropriate.

(Source: J Am Med Assoc 2006, 296(2): 193-201)

Fruits and Vegetables Decrease Cancer Risk

Numerous studies have shown that the more servings of fruits and vegetables you consume each week, the lower your risk of developing cancer. A newly published study demonstrates that eating plenty of fruits and vegetables also decrease your risk of developing non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. Since anti-oxidants play an important role in cancer prevention, fruits and vegetables that are rich in anti-oxidants are particularly important. Green leafy vegetables like spinach and kale, and cruciferous vegetables like broccoli and brussels sprouts are all rich in cancer-fighting anti-oxidants.

(Source: J Clin Nutr 2006; 83(6): 1401-10.)

The Role of Vitamin D in Cancer Prevention

As residents of a northern climate, Canadians are at an increased risk of being deficient in vitamin D. Sixty-three observational studies have been done on the link between vitamin D deficiency and increased cancer risk. The majority of those studies have found that having sufficient amounts of vitamin D in your daily diet or through supplements will lower your risk of developing cancer.

(Am J Public Health 2006; 96(2): 252-61)

Naturally Occurring Salicylic Acid Lowers the Risk of Colon Cancer

Salicylic Acid is most commonly associated with aspirin, but it is also naturally present in a wide range of fruits, vegetables, herbs and spices. Previous studies have shown that daily consumption of a 75-80 mg aspirin tablet can lead to a 40-50% decrease in the risk of developing colon cancer. However, why take a pharmaceutical if you don't need to? Considerable evidence suggests that it is also possible to obtain this amount of salicylic acid from a regular consumption of fruits, vegetables, herbs, and spices. In particular, spices such as curry powder, paprika,

rosemary, thyme, and oregano contain substantial amounts of salicylates.

(Source: Proc Nutr Soc 2006; 65(1):93-6)

Supps Support Smarts

Folic acid supplementation may substantially improve cognitive function for older adults, according to an article in January's *Lancet*.

Cognitive function declines with age, especially cognitive domains related to information processing speed and memory. Such changes in cognitive function have been linked to risk of dementia in old age. Previous studies have suggested that low folate and raised homocysteine concentrations in the blood are important risk factors associated with poor cognitive performance.

The *Lancet* study occurred over three years with 818 participants, randomly assigned either 800g of folic acid or a placebo. The results showed that cognitive functions such as memory and information processing speed improved in adults given folic acid compared with placebo.

Selenium Supplements Slow HIV Progression

Deficiencies in selenium have been noted in HIV-positive patients; and new evidence suggests that selenium supplements can improve immune system function. University of Miami researchers randomly assigned 262 patients infected with HIV to 200 micrograms of selenium per day or placebo. They found that subjects in the selenium group displayed no further progression of HIV disease, while those taking the placebo evidenced a continued viral load. The study findings are published in the January 22 issue of the *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

Source: Forbes magazine online

Wellness Programs Trim Healthcare Costs

IBM has given employees more than \$130 million in wellness incentives—or payments to get healthy. As an IBM employee, if you stop smoking you get \$150. If you exercise three times a week, you get another \$150. If you fill out a health record, which flags employees to their individual risk of disease, you get still another \$150. And this is not just happening at IBM. Wellness is now corporate America's hot new strategy for controlling health care costs. In exchange for staying fit, some firms are offering employees a whole slew of incentives, from iPods to reward points at chain stores to discounts on health insurance premiums. For companies, it's all about the money.

Studies show \$3 in health care savings for every \$1 spent on wellness.

Source: CBS HealthWatch

Frist call: Your Licensed BC ND
1 800 277 1128
Specialists in disease prevention & clinical nutrition

Children Conditioned on Junk

Even when still in diapers, children have become the targets of saturation marketing by food and beverage makers, leading critics to charge that children are suffering from an epidemic of “marketing-related diseases”—notably, obesity.

The average child is exposed to 27 advertisements for food per day, the vast majority of them for nutritionally weak foods that are high in fats, oils, sugar and calories.

Annual sales of food and beverages to children and youth were more than \$27 billion US in 2002. It's estimated children see one commercial for food every five minutes.

One study comparing commercials on Saturday morning children shows to Saturday evening adult programs found that 78 per cent of food ads during adult programming was for foods high in fat, sodium, cholesterol or sugar; for children's programming, it was 97 per cent.

Eight of the top 10 food companies that advertise to kids on television now have websites featuring games, contests, e-mail cards and screensavers. At Kellogg's Fun K Town, kids collect stamps by watching commercials; there is “exclusive American Idols tour footage only from Pop-Tarts!” and crafts “using yummy Froot Loops.”

One recent study found online gamers spend five to seven minutes playing an “advergame,” or about 14 times the amount of time spent watching a TV commercial.

Quebec, in 1980, became the first jurisdiction in the world to ban nearly all advertising directed at children under 13. Back then the bigger worry was cavities from sugary foods. But Bill Jeffery, national co-coordinator of the Center for Science in the Public Interest, says the main justification for the ban “was related to the unique vulnerability of children to deception.” Since the ban, Quebec's obesity rates and soft drink consumption have been among the lowest in Canada.

Vancouver Sun, Nov 21, 2007

Alzheimer's and Heart Health

If weight loss, eating healthful foods and getting more exercise are all accepted as beneficial to your health, think about this: What is good for the heart is also good for the brain. Canadians just don't realize it, as survey results to be released in January, attest.

The link between vascular disease caused by poor blood circulation and Alzheimer's is now accepted. And many of the discoveries about risk-reduction strategies for both conditions are pointing in the same direction.

Yet a nationwide poll of nearly 1900 Canadians, conducted by Leger Marketing for the Alzheimer Society of Canada, reveals people aren't making the connection between healthy living and a healthy brain.

Alzheimer's is now the second most-feared, age-related illness, behind cancer and tied with heart disease.

Dr. Howard Feldman, an Alzheimer's expert who is head of neurology at the University of B.C. and at Vancouver Hospital, said that “one has to recognize the commonalities in risk factors between brain and heart health. They aren't identical but similar.” Similar enough take concrete actions to reduce the risk of both diseases.

Since fewer than 10 per cent of Alzheimer's cases are said to be strongly influenced by inheritable genetic factors, and since the disease is now known to start long before symptoms appear, a year-long educational and awareness campaign by Alzheimer's societies which began in January, is focussed on lifestyle-related risk reduction strategies.

Feldman said it is time to draw attention to all the studies in recent years that have suggested diet, exercise and control over cholesterol, blood pressure and circulatory health are beneficial to the brain.

ACTIVITIES THAT MAY REDUCE THE RISK OF ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

There are no guarantees, but research in recent years has pointed in these directions:

- Be physically active, reduce stress, don't smoke and avoid excessive alcohol consumption;
- Stay socially active;
- Keep brain cells active by intellectual engagement and by doing puzzles, hobbies, games;
- Wear helmets while participating in activities such as skating, skiing, skateboarding, in-line skating and cycling, because brain injuries are associated with the later development of Alzheimer's disease;
- Reduce meat consumption, eat more fruits and vegetables and fatty fish such as salmon twice a week.

Source: Vancouver Sun, Jan 02/07

Conversation on Health Still Time to Get Involved In Provincial Process

The Conversation on Health Public Forums have already begun, but even if you've missed the forum in your region there are still other ways to get involved.

To find out more about the scheduled forums in each of the health regions, and whether you can still register or attend, follow this link: <http://www.bcconversationonhealth.ca/436/1353/>

If you like, simply send an e-mail with your opinions to: ConversationonHealth@Victoria1.gov.bc.ca

If you have the inclination, nothing sends a message better than a hand-written letter. Send letters to: Ministry of Health, 1515 Blanshard St., Victoria, BC, V8W 3C8.

You can also simply contact your local MLA. Don't know who that is or perhaps where to contact them? You can either phone Enquiry BC at 1-800-663-7867, or link to <http://www.leg.bc.ca/mla/3-1-1.htm>

Calling the toll-free Conversation on Health line at 1-866-884-2055 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

We know that the government is particularly interested in hearing from health care users, as well as health care professionals, so your input is important and will be valued.

What are the main points naturopathic doctors are concerned with? The ability of NDs to provide the best care possible is compromised by old-fashioned and outdated rules that make no sense. For example:

Link to our Redesigned & Updated Website

www.bcna.ca

PHYSICIAN REFERRALS * NATUROPATHIC MEDICAL INFORMATION * STUDENT LINKS

Your Health is published quarterly by the British Columbia Naturopathic Association, the professional association for naturopathic physicians in the province. It is compiled and edited by Glenn Cassie. The information provided herein is for educational and reference purposes only; it is not intended as a substitute for consultation and diagnosis nor treatment from a qualified doctor.

Your Health is provided free to BCNA members.

The BCNA offers patients, across the province, referrals to licenced naturopathic doctors (NDs) in their area, as well as student information to persons interested in the profession. It is the BCNA's purpose

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NDs can't refer their patients to a specialist. Instead patients must be re-diagnosed by an MD, which wastes time and money.

NDs can't visit their patients in hospitals or other institutional settings—even if a patient specifically request care from their ND.

NDs don't have access to the diagnostics they need, and must send laboratory samples to Alberta and Washington State.

Patients who choose NDs deserve better than red tape and outdated rules standing in the way of their health care needs being met safely, quickly and effectively.

Sustainability can only be achieved by focusing the health care system on disease prevention and wellness. Patient choice is key. If government wants citizens to be actively engaged in maintaining their own health, the choices people make about the kind of care they want must be respected.

We have developed a four-point plan that would ease budgetary burdens on the health care system while improving access and better care for all BC residents. If you'd like a copy, contact us by e-mail (bcna@bcna.ca) or call us toll-free, 1-800-277-1128.

Naturopathic medicine and other forms of complementary medicine already focus on wellness and prevention and can be a part of the solution. NDs provide safe and effective primary care to tens of thousands of British Columbians. A growing number of British Columbians are choosing the services of a naturopathic physician.

to advance the scientific, educational and professional aspects of naturopathic medicine.

The public is welcome and encouraged to join the BCNA. An annual membership fee of \$25 assists the BCNA in its efforts to increase government recognition and heighten the profession's profile. Membership entitles you to a one-year subscription to Your Health and other news and information bulletins.

Contact us online at www.bcna.ca, e-mail us at bcna@bcna.ca, call us at 604/736-6646 or 1-800/277-1128 or write to us at 2238 Pine St, Vancouver, BC, Canada, V6J 5G4.

