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SENATE  
S. No. 1846

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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

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#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

Naturopathic medicine or naturopathy is a complementary and alternative medicine. Naturopathic practice may include different modalities such as manual therapy, hydrotherapy, herbalism, acupuncture, counselling, environmental medicine, aromatherapy, orthomolecular medicine, nutritional counselling, homeopathy, and chiropractic. Practitioners emphasize a holistic approach to patient care. Naturopathy has its origins in a variety of world medicine practices, including the Ayurveda of India and Nature Cure of Europe.

Naturopaths use standard medical diagnostic techniques to treat disease with natural medicines and therapies in lieu of pharmaceutical drugs and surgeries. These natural approaches include clinical nutrition, botanical medicine, homeopathy, lifestyle counselling, naturopathic physical medicine, natural childbirth and basic training in oriental medicine. At present, the Philippines does not have any laws to regulate the practice of naturopathy. Individuals who complete a home study course in as little as six (6) weeks can serve as a naturopath. This is a cause for concern as people's health and lives are put at risk by the improper practice of naturopathy. Hence, this bill seeks to establish educational requirements for the practice of naturopathic medicine in the Philippines. Specifically, to practice naturopathy in Philippines, the applicant for a professional license must a graduate of an accredited four-year residence training program; pass a national examination; be licensed as a naturopath in another jurisdiction; and meet any and all other requirements as set forth by the Board of Examiners.\*

*miriam defensor santiago*  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO

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\* This bill was originally filed in the 14<sup>th</sup> Congress.



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1 AN ACT  
2 REGULATING THE PRACTICE OF NATUROPATHIC MEDICINE OR NATUROPATHY  
3 IN THE PHILIPPINES

*Be it enacted by the Senate and the House of Representatives of the Philippines in Congress assembled:*

4 SECTION 1. *Short Title.* - This Act shall be known as the "Naturopathic Medicine Act."

5 SECTION 2. *Declaration of Policy.* - It is a policy of the State to promote the general  
6 welfare of the people. Towards this end, the State shall enact a law to regulate the practice of  
7 naturopathic medicine or naturopathy in the Philippines.

8 SECTION 3. *Definition of Terms.* - For the purposes of this Act, the term:

9 (A) "Diagnose" means to examine in any manner another person, parts of a person's  
10 body, or substances, fluids, or materials excreted, taken, or removed from a person's body or  
11 produced by a person's body to determine the source, kind, or extent of a disease or other  
12 physical condition.

13 (B) "Minor office procedure" means the use of operative, electrical, or other methods  
14 for the repair of, and care incidental to, superficial lacerations and abrasions, the removal of  
15 foreign bodies located in superficial tissues, and the use of antiseptics and local anaesthetics in  
16 connection with these methods. The term includes the use of local anaesthesia applied topically  
17 or by injection, whether natural or prescription, in superficial tissues associated with the  
18 performance of minor office procedures. The term shall not include general or spinal anaesthesia,  
19 major surgery, surgery of the body cavities, or specialized surgeries, including plastic surgery or  
20 surgery involving the eyes, tendons, ligaments, or major blood vessels.

1 (C) "Natural antibiotics" means antimicrobial, antifungal, and antiprotozoal agents  
2 that are naturally occurring substances or manufactured substance that are substantially identical  
3 to the naturally occurring substances.

4 (D) "Natural medicines" mean:

5 (1) Food, food extracts, and dietary supplements as defined by Republic Act  
6 No. 7394, as amended, otherwise known as The Consumer Act of the  
7 Philippines;

8 (2) Homeopathic remedies;

9 (3) Plant substances that are not designated as prescription drugs or controlled  
10 substances;

11 (4) Over-the-counter medications;

12 (5) Prescriptions that are consistent with the competent practice of  
13 naturopathy; and

14 (6) Substances prepared according to the homeopathic pharmacopeia of the  
15 United States of America.

16 (E) "Naturopathic childbirth" means uncomplicated natural childbirth assisted by a  
17 naturopathic physician. The term includes the use of natural substances, ophthalmic antibiotics,  
18 emergency childbirth medicines, and simple uncomplicated episiotomies, but does not include  
19 the use of forceps delivery, general or spinal anaesthesia, caesarean section, or induced abortion.

20 (F) "Naturopathic medicine" or "naturopathy" means a system of primary health care  
21 for the prevention, diagnosis, and care of human health conditions, injuries, and diseases that  
22 uses education and natural substances and remedies to support and stimulate the individual's  
23 intrinsic self-healing processes.

24 (G) "Naturopathic mobilization therapy" means manually administering mechanical  
25 treatment of body structures or tissues to restore the normal physiological function of the body  
26 by normalizing and balancing the musculoskeletal system of the body. The term does not include  
27 osseous manipulation.

1 (H) "Naturopathic Physician" means a person who holds the person out to the public as  
2 licensed to practice naturopathic medicine or who practices naturopathic medicine under this  
3 Act.

4 (I) "Naturopathic Physical Medicine" means the use of the physical agents of air,  
5 water, heat, cold, sound, light, and electromagnetic non-ionizing radiation and the physical  
6 modalities of electrotherapy, biofeedback, diathermy, ultraviolet light, ultrasound, hydrotherapy,  
7 naturopathic mobilization therapy, and exercise. The term does not include the practice of  
8 physical therapy, acupuncture, or chiropractic.

9 (J) "Topical preparations" means topical analgesics, anaesthetics, antiseptics,  
10 scabicides, antifungals, and antibacterials.

11 SECTION 4. *Practice of Naturopathic Medicine and Use of Title "Naturopathic*  
12 *Physician."* - Only a person licensed or otherwise authorized under this Act shall practice  
13 naturopathic medicine or use the title "Naturopath," "Doctor of Naturopathy," "Doctor of  
14 Naturopathic Medicine," or use the initials "ND" or "NMD," or hold oneself out to the public  
15 that they practice naturopathy in any of its forms.

16 SECTION 5. *Philippine Board of Naturopathic Medicine.* - (A) A Philippine Board of  
17 Naturopathic Medicine shall be appointed in the same manner as the appointment of Members of  
18 other professional boards to assist the Professional Regulation Commission (PRC) on matters of  
19 professional licensing.

20 (B) The Board shall be composed of not less than seven (7) licensed naturopathic  
21 physicians who meet the requirements set forth in this Act. An Executive Secretary to the Board  
22 shall be appointed and shall be a licensed naturopathic physician.

23 (C) There shall be two (2) members of the Board from the medical or osteopathic  
24 community and no one discipline shall comprise both members.

25 SECTION 6. *Requirements for a Professional License.* - To qualify for a license as a  
26 naturopathic physician, an applicant shall fulfill the following requirements:

- 1 (A) Application. -The applicant shall file an application with the PRC.
- 2 (B) Education. - The applicant shall have received an education, including a degree of  
3 Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine, "N.D.," from an approved naturopathic college. For purposes  
4 of this section, the term "approved naturopathic college" means a college or residential program  
5 granting the degree of Doctor of Naturopathy or Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine that:
- 6 (1) Is accredited by an agency recognized by the government or approved by  
7 the Board which meets the standards generally recognized and being met  
8 by other licensing jurisdictions; or
- 9 (2) Has been approved by the Board after the college or residential program  
10 was investigated and found to meet education standards generally  
11 recognized and being met by other licensing jurisdictions.
- 12 (C) Experience. - The applicant shall have had experience as a naturopathic physician  
13 satisfactory to the Board and in accordance with the PRC's regulations.
- 14 (D) Examination. - The applicant shall have passed an examination satisfactory to the  
15 Board and in accordance with the PRC's regulations, which may include the naturopathic  
16 physicians licensing examination, or other test that maintains the standards generally accepted  
17 nationally.
- 18 (E) Age. -The applicant shall be at least twenty-one (21) years of age.
- 19 (F) Citizenship. - The applicant shall be a Filipino citizen.
- 20 (G) Character. - The applicant shall be of good moral character as determined by the  
21 Board.
- 22 (H) Fees. - The applicant shall pay a fee as determined by the PRC for admission to a  
23 Board-conducted examination and for a license.

24 SECTION 7. *Exempt Persons.* - The following persons under the following limitations  
25 may practice naturopathic medicine within the Philippines without a license:

- 26 (A) Any naturopathic physician who is employed as a resident in a public hospital,  
27 provided such practice is limited to such hospital and is under the supervision of a licensed  
28 naturopathic physician or other licensed physician;

1 (B) Any naturopathic physician who is licensed in another country and who is  
2 meeting a naturopathic physician licensed in the Philippines, for purposes of consultation,  
3 provided such practice is limited to such consultation;

4 (C) Any naturopathic physician who is licensed in another country, who is visiting a  
5 medical school or teaching hospital in the Philippines, to receive naturopathic medical or medical  
6 instruction for a period not to exceed six (6) months or to conduct naturopathic medical or  
7 medical instruction, provided such practice is limited to such instruction and is under the  
8 supervision of a licensed naturopathic physician or other licensed physician;

9 (D) Any naturopathic physician who is authorized by a foreign government to practice  
10 in relation to its diplomatic, consular, or maritime staff, provided such practice is limited to such  
11 staff;

12 (E) Any intern who is employed by a hospital and who is a graduate of a naturopathic  
13 medical school, provided such practice is limited to such hospital and is under the supervision of  
14 a licensed naturopathic physician or other licensed physician;

15 (F) Any naturopathic medical student who is performing a clinical clerkship or  
16 similar function in a hospital and who is matriculated in a naturopathic medical school which  
17 meets satisfactory standards, provided such practice is limited to such clerkship or similar  
18 function in such hospital;

19 (G) A person engaged in the sale of vitamins, health foods, dietary supplements,  
20 herbs, or other products of nature, the sale of which is not otherwise prohibited under Philippine  
21 law; or

22 (H) A person providing nutritional advice, giving advice concerning proper nutrition,  
23 or giving information as to the use and role of food and food ingredients, including dietary  
24 supplements, except that providing nutritional advice under this subdivision does not include the  
25 authority to practice medicine or surgery, to undertake the treatment or cure of a disease, pain,  
26 injury, deformity, or physical or mental condition, or to state that a product might cure a disease,  
27 pain, injury, deformity, or other condition other than providing nutritional support for the person.

1           SECTION 8. *Prohibited Acts; Penalties.* - It shall be unlawful for any person to hold  
2 himself or herself out to the public as licensed to practice naturopathic medicine or who practices  
3 naturopathic medicine under this Act without having acquired a professional license under this  
4 Act. The offender shall be punished by a penalty of imprisonment of not less than five (5) years  
5 but not more than ten (10) years, or a fine of not less than Fifty Thousand Pesos (P50,000.00) but  
6 not more than One Hundred Thousand Pesos (P100,000.00), or both, at the discretion of the  
7 court, taking into consideration all attending circumstances.

8           This section shall not apply to those persons exempt from acquiring a professional license  
9 for the practice of naturopathic medicine under Section 7 of this Act.

10           SECTION 9. *Implementing Rules and Regulations.* - Within six (6) months from the  
11 passage of this Act, the Board of Naturopathic Medicine shall promulgate the necessary rules  
12 and regulations to implement the provisions of this Act.

13           SECTION 10. *Separability Clause.* - If any provision or part hereof is held invalid or  
14 unconstitutional, the remainder of the Act or the provision not otherwise affected shall remain  
15 valid and subsisting.

16           SECTION 11. *Repealing Clause.* - Any law, presidential decree or issuance, executive  
17 order, letter of instruction, administrative order, rule, or regulation contrary to or inconsistent  
18 with the provisions of this Act is hereby repealed, modified, or amended accordingly.

19           SECTION 12. *Effectivity Clause.* - This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its  
20 publication in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

Approved,