

November 21, 2024

The Honourable David Eby, Premier of British Columbia

The Honourable John Rustad, Leader of the Official Opposition

Sonia Furstenu, Leader of the Green Party of British Columbia

Delivered via email

Dear Premier Eby, Mr. Rustad and Ms. Furstenu,

The Association of Naturopathic Doctors of BC (BCND) is reaching out to offer clarity on the myriad of ways naturopathic doctors (NDs) can continue to be and already are a part of the solution to BC's healthcare access challenges. With healthcare needs rising across British Columbia, NDs are already acting as primary care providers in many underserved communities and are well-positioned to help meet expanding primary care needs across the province. NDs support community-based healthcare and respect the choices that many British Columbians make to seek care through private providers.

NDs are skilled and educated health providers trained in a range of clinical areas, from chronic disease management to preventive care, with a unique emphasis on holistic, patient-centered approaches. For many individuals and families across BC, NDs are an accessible and trusted choice, offering personalized healthcare within their communities. Particularly in underserved areas where accessing conventional medical providers can be challenging, NDs are often available and responsive, providing vital support and continuity of care.

Supporting Community and Patient Choice in Healthcare

Many British Columbians value having choice in their healthcare providers and respect the option to seek care through private providers such as NDs. By working collaboratively within the healthcare system, NDs can complement existing services, ensuring that individuals have options that align with their values and health goals. We believe supporting the role of NDs within the broader healthcare system helps to meet the demand for accessible care while respecting patient autonomy and diverse health needs.

Addressing Access and System Gaps

Naturopathic doctors are uniquely positioned to help bridge the gaps in BC's healthcare system by:

- Reducing pressure on urgent care and emergency rooms through preventive care and effective management of chronic conditions.
- Expanding access to primary care in underserved and rural communities, where conventional providers may be scarce or overextended.
- Providing flexible care options that meet the needs of diverse populations, including those who may face barriers within the conventional system.
- NDs are regulated healthcare professionals who undergo extensive training and practice under a standardized scope. Their ability to deliver primary care services, including laboratory testing, medication prescribing, and chronic disease management, makes them a valuable part of BC's healthcare landscape.

Moving Forward Together

Cross-government collaboration is essential in British Columbia's dynamic political landscape, where addressing complex healthcare challenges requires coordinated efforts across parties, ministries and stakeholders. Collaborative approaches ensure that diverse expertise and resources are leveraged, enabling innovative solutions to pressing issues such as the toxic drug crisis, mental health care, and primary care shortages while meeting the evolving needs of British Columbians.

As BC seeks sustainable, forward-thinking healthcare solutions, we respectfully urge consideration of naturopathic medicine as part of a comprehensive strategy for addressing our province's healthcare needs. Investing in and recognizing the contributions of NDs will enhance patient choice, improve access to care, and ultimately contribute to the health and wellness of British Columbians.

We appreciate your attention to this important issue, would welcome a conversation, and look forward to seeing BC's healthcare system evolve in a way that empowers all residents with the choices and access to care they deserve.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the health of our province.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Lindsay'.

Dr. Vanessa Lindsay, ND; BCND Board President