

October 6, 2025

Honourable Jennifer Whiteside
Minister of Labour
Province of British Columbia

Delivered via email

Dear Minister Whiteside,

We are writing on behalf of the British Columbia Naturopathic Doctors (BCND) to raise a concern that directly touches on two of your core mandate priorities: reducing costs for families and strengthening health care.

On September 23, the College of Complementary Health Professionals of BC announced a 25 percent increase to naturopathic doctor registration fees in the first year and a 50 percent increase over two years. This decision was made without notice, consultation, or a clear explanation of the cost drivers, and is disproportionate compared to other professions regulated within the same college. While colleges have the authority to set fees, that authority must be exercised with accountability. Registrants are entitled to clarity on how costs are determined, assurance that funds are managed responsibly, and meaningful engagement before increases of this magnitude are imposed.

Naturopathic doctors collectively see thousands of patients across British Columbia each year. They provide primary care, manage complex cases, order and interpret diagnostic tests, prescribe medications, and coordinate care for patients who often have nowhere else to go. One in three households in BC chooses to see an ND, which means that when regulatory costs are increased so suddenly and steeply, the impact is felt not only by practitioners but also by patients who risk losing access to care. When regulatory costs are increased so suddenly and steeply, practitioners are forced to consider whether they can continue in practice. This risks reducing primary care capacity in communities that are already underserved and ultimately shifts costs back onto families who must seek care elsewhere, pay out-of-pocket, or go without. This outcome runs counter to your mandate to reduce costs for families and ensure British Columbians have affordable access to care.

The College has justified these fee increases by pointing to the Health Professions and Occupations Act and the establishment of the Office of the Superintendent of Health Professions and Occupations. While we support the goal of modernizing regulation, implementation of the HPOA has been poorly managed. Communication has been limited, consultation windows have been unreasonably short, and no cost modelling has been shared with those expected to fund these changes. Instead of providing transparency and stability, the process has created uncertainty and mistrust across the profession. What was meant to be a framework for confidence and collaboration has, without stronger leadership, become a source of disruption at the very moment the health system needs optimism and stability. Other health professionals are watching closely and fear they may soon face the same unsustainable costs and disruption.

Your mandate letter highlights the importance of strengthening health care and supporting workers to build a more sustainable system. These fee increases undermine both. They destabilize the health workforce by putting pressure on practitioners who deliver primary care every day, and they undermine affordability by increasing the likelihood that patients will bear the costs through reduced access or higher out-of-pocket spending. There is still an opportunity to correct course, but it requires slowing the pace of implementation, restoring transparency, and ensuring that decisions are made in partnership with those who deliver care.

We respectfully ask for your leadership in ensuring that HPOA implementation is slowed and carefully managed so that it supports, rather than undermines, your mandate commitments. The rollout must include clear and consistent communication, adequate time for meaningful engagement, and early collaboration with associations to anticipate and mitigate impacts before decisions are finalized. Regulatory colleges should be directed to provide transparent, data-driven justifications for cost increases and to approach implementation in a way that builds trust, supports the workforce, and strengthens care for British Columbians.

BCND would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how we can work together to ensure that regulatory modernization advances your mandate to reduce costs for families and strengthen health care.

Sincerely,



Dr. Vanessa Lindsay
President



Alix Arndt
CEO