

January 10, 2018

Senator Mia Costello
Chair
Senate Labor and Commerce
State Capitol, Room 504
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Opposition to Alaska Senate Bill 120

Dear Chairwoman Costello:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA) and our physician and medical student members, I write in **opposition to Alaska Senate Bill (S.B.) 120**. This bill would inappropriately authorize naturopaths to prescribe medications in a manner beyond naturopaths' education and training.

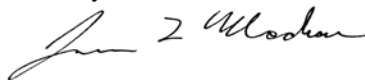
A close review of naturopathic education and training reveals several shortcomings that should give the Alaska Senate pause when conferring independent authority on naturopaths to prescribe and dispense drugs. Naturopathy – by its very definition as a “natural modality” based on the belief that the human body has an innate healing ability – pays almost no attention to pharmacological treatment or education. For example, naturopathic doctoral programs accredited by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education require a mere seven to 11 credits of pharmacologic intervention during naturopathic training.

Because naturopathic training does not include meaningful pharmaceutical education or provide sufficient experience, by virtue of the accreditation of naturopathic schools and the underlying philosophies of naturopathy, this bill's authorization of naturopath prescribing of prescription drugs threatens the health and safety of Alaska's patients. S.B. 120 also represents a dangerous step towards allowing naturopaths to prescribe controlled substances, authority being sought in several states across the country.

Further, as Medicare, Medicaid, Denali Kid Care, and most private insurance plans do not cover naturopathic medicine, S.B. 120 threatens to increase, not decrease, the cost of care for Alaska's patients.

The AMA thanks you for the opportunity to submit these comments. Based on the above, we urge you to **oppose S.B. 120**. If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Schleiter, JD, Senior Legislative Attorney, Advocacy Resource Center, at kristin.schleiter@ama-assn.org or (312) 464-4783.

Sincerely,



James L. Madara, MD

cc: Alaska State Medical Association