



2022 POSITION PAPER PRIMARY CARE

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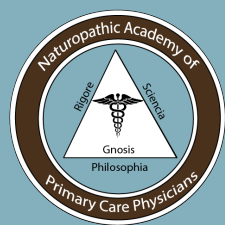
NAPCP PRIMARY CARE POSITION PAPER

Naturopathic primary care physicians (“ND PCPs”) utilize a principle of lowest force intervention that results in the appropriate and effective diagnosis, treatment, co-management, and referral of primary care patients. This lowest force algorithm not only serves diverse patient needs by offering lower-force treatment interventions, but also adeptly manages acute presentations while additionally addressing underlying cause(s) of both acute and chronic disease.

Naturopathic physicians are uniquely suited to provide primary care, as defined below by both the World Health Organization and the Institute of Medicine.

“Primary health care is a whole-of-society approach to health and well-being centered on the needs and preferences of individuals, families, and communities. It addresses the broader determinants of health and focuses on comprehensive and interrelated aspects of physical, mental, and social health and well-being”
(WHO, 2019).

“Primary care is the provision of integrated, accessible health care services by clinicians who are accountable for addressing a large majority of personal health care needs, developing a sustained partnership with patients, and practicing in the context of family and community.” (IOM, 1996)

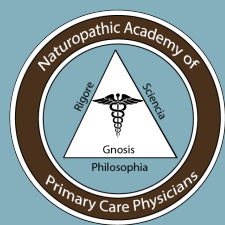


Naturopathic primary care is defined as a holistic, community-based, first contact with the medical system for undifferentiated patients. Utilizing a broad range of therapeutic modalities ND PCPs seek to:

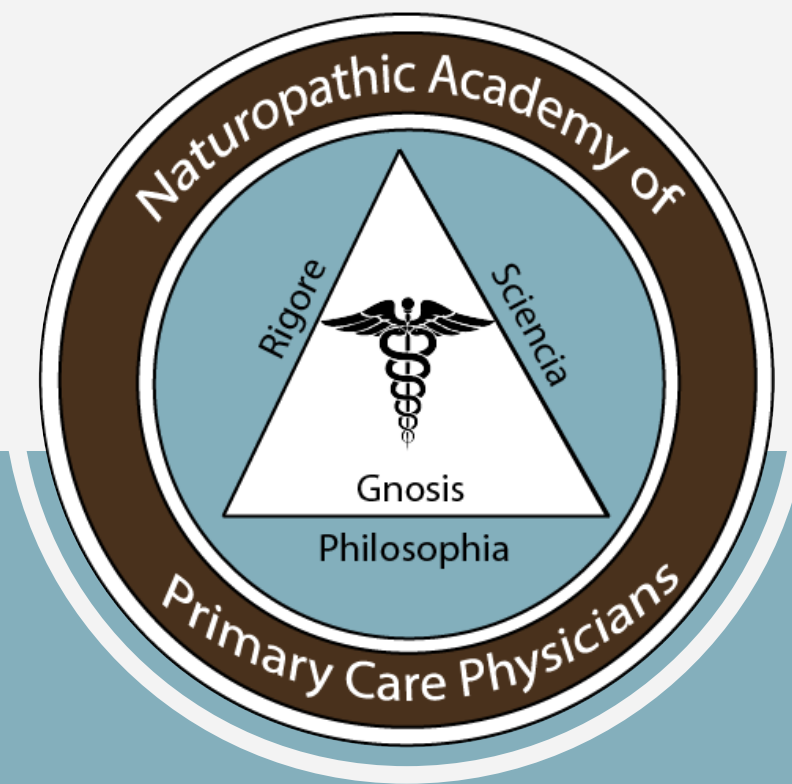
- Promote individual and community wellness;
- Provide patient-centered education and advocacy;
- Prevent illness via proper utilization of screening evaluations and immunization practices;
- Diagnose and treat disease, and;
- Consult, co-manage and/or refer appropriately for care that is necessary to maximize patient outcomes.

The NAPCP recognizes that these requirements preclude the practice of naturopathic primary care in jurisdictions that do not allow for a broad scope of practice including prescriptive authority and ability to order and interpret laboratory investigations/imaging studies.

Naturopathic physicians are formally trained specifically as primary care clinicians. Although ND PCPs often attend to acute symptoms and presentations, identifying and addressing underlying barriers remains a priority. This focus similarly makes ND PCPs distinctly suited to ameliorating health inequities. These inequities may take the form of lack of access to health-promoting resources, as well as inadequate social determinants of health. Like other primary care providers, as a patient's first (and sustained) point of contact in the healthcare system, ND PCPs are positioned to quickly identify which health determinants are affecting a patient. ND PCPs then work to improve patient health outcomes with attention to harm reduction wherever possible.



Naturopathic primary care is also community health care. ND PCPs offer a variety of modalities that can fit within a community's culture, values and mores, while additionally recognizing patterns of inequity that shape a community's health. ND PCPs strive to educate patients, so that they and their communities are empowered to care for collective physical, mental, and emotional well-being. ND PCPs work cooperatively with other healthcare professionals so that patients and communities have access to the most comprehensive medical care available.



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