



**MEDIA RELEASE
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Naturopathic Physicians to Prescribe Pharmaceutical Drugs in British Columbia

April 9, 2009 – New Westminster, BC. On April 9th, 2009, regulation was passed in Victoria which will provide naturopathic physicians in BC with the right to prescribe pharmaceutical drugs. The Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine commends the Honourable George Abbott, Minister of Health and the Liberal government for honouring the 2008 Throne Speech commitment to bring greater healthcare choice to BC citizens and for taking bold steps to improve BC's overburdened healthcare system. There are only three other jurisdictions in North America which offer Naturopathic Physicians these same rights: Washington, Oregon and Arizona. British Columbia is the first and only province in Canada to move forward in this highly commendable direction.

Expanding the scope of practice for naturopathic physicians in line with their education and expertise will allow NDs to better serve their patients. Making an appropriate prescription is fundamental to the practice of medicine and access to a schedule of pharmaceutical preparations will enable naturopathic doctors to fully manage their patients' care in accordance with their training and obligations as primary care physicians.

This important milestone in the history of naturopathic medical practice in BC is welcomed by Western Canada's only naturopathic medical school, the Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine. " We look forward to fully assuming our expanded role in providing improved services to patients and in doing our part to alleviate the overwhelming demands on BC's healthcare system," says Dr. Pat Wolfe, President and Executive Director of BINM. Media Contact: Dr. Pat Wolfe, President and founding member of the Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine pwolfe@binm.org 604-777-9981 www.binm.org

NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health Services

ROLE EXPANDS FOR MIDWIVES, NATUROPATHIC DOCTORS, NURSES

VICTORIA – B.C. is supporting health professionals and creating more choice for patients by enhancing the scope of practice for midwives, naturopathic physicians and registered nurses, Health Services Minister George Abbott announced today.

“Expanding the role of midwives, registered nurses and naturopathic physicians allows B.C.’s health system to offer more options for patients,” said Abbott. “British Columbians made it clear during the Conversation on Health that they want increased choice and better access to health services and today we are meeting our 2008 throne speech commitment to expand the scope of practice for these professions.”

Under the new regulations, midwives will be authorized to deliver a broader range of services to new and expectant mothers. These services include initiating induction and augmentation of labour, use of acupuncture for pain relief in labour and assisting medical doctors with C-sections. These specialized practices will be performed by midwives who have obtained additional education and certification.

“Enhancing the scope of practice for midwives recognizes the full range of training and expertise of this profession and supports our goal of ensuring safe and timely care for our clients,” said Terry Lyn Evans, president of the College of Midwives of B.C. “The new regulations are great news for the midwifery profession and for the new and expectant moms who choose to use the services of a midwife.”

There are close to 140 midwives practising in British Columbia and midwifery has been a regulated health profession in B.C. since 1998.

The enhanced scope of practice for naturopathic physicians means practitioners with additional training will be able to prescribe medication as appropriate to their primary care practices.

To protect patient safety, the regulations require naturopathic physicians to have successfully completed a certification course before administering, prescribing or dispensing prescription medication. Additionally, the College of Naturopathic Physicians of B.C. will receive access to B.C.’s PharmaNet database system so that it can monitor its members’ prescribing patterns. The College will also establish standards, limits and conditions for prescribing based on the recommendations of an inter-professional committee that includes medical doctors, pharmacists and a Ministry of Health Services representative.

“The scope of practice legislation for naturopathic physicians has been unchanged in B.C. for more than 50 years,” said Dr. Lorne Swetlikoff, naturopathic physician and board chair of the College of Naturopathic Physicians of British Columbia. “This move recognizes the current education and skills of naturopathic physicians and allows us to fully support the needs of our patients.”

There are over 300 registered naturopathic physicians in B.C. and naturopathic medicine has been a regulated health profession in B.C. since 1936.

With the enhanced scope of practice for the nursing profession, registered nurses will now be authorized to independently provide a broader range of health services including suturing, tuberculosis screening and managing labour in hospital when the primary care provider is absent. Registered nurses working triage will now also be able to immediately order diagnostic ultrasounds and X-rays. Additionally, registered nurses will be able to dispense or administer prescription medications in urgent situations including severe allergic reaction, drug overdose, post-partum bleeding and for communicable disease prevention and management.

“An enhanced scope of practice for registered nurses recognizes the key role that they play in B.C.’s health-care system,” said Val Cartmel, president of the College of Registered Nurses of B.C. “These changes will increase efficiency and choice for patients while registered nurses and nurse practitioners will continue to work closely with other health-care professions to provide safe, quality care to patients.”

There are more than 34,500 registered nurses in the province and registered nurses have been regulated in B.C. since 1918.

Over the past year, B.C. has made a number of regulatory changes to increase the accountability and transparency of B.C.’s health system and support health professionals. In order to streamline the regulatory process, the Province repealed a number of individual pieces of health legislation and 20 health professions, regulated by 19 professional colleges, have now transitioned under the Health Professions Act. Additionally, the Health Professions Review Board, which has the power to review the timeliness and outcome of health regulatory college decisions, began receiving applications for review in March 2009.

For more information on the regulation on health professions on B.C., please visit www.health.gov.bc.ca/leg/.

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