

FLORIDA

Florida was a hotbed of activity this year. The Florida Association of Naturopathic Physicians is actively pursuing legislation to re-license “naturopathic physicians,” which would adversely impact the natural health community. They hired three lobbyists this year to help them with the effort this year. Senator Daniel Webster, R-9, introduced Senate Bill 2556, and Representative Marty Bowen, R-65, introduced House Bill 695, bills to re-license “naturopathic physicians.”

The excitement reached its high point when the bills were heard in their respective committees for the first time. In the House, HB 695 was initially defeated in committee. However, after a motion to reconsider the previous vote, the bill passed out of committee after the Majority Leader, at the request of the Speaker of the House, entered the committee room and voted in favor of the bill. Fortunately, the bill stalled in its tracks and died when the legislature adjourned.

The tide turned in our favor when the Senate Committee defeated SB 2556. It was a nervous time as Senators were frequently changing their position on the bill, but in the end, the bill died when the legislature adjourned. We expect bills to be introduced in 2006.

IDAHO

Congratulations to the Idaho Coalition for Natural Health for successfully defending the nation’s first health freedom law from attack by special interest groups. However, the state did pass Senate Bill 1158 by Senator Robert Geddes, R-31, a bill in which naturopathic physicians recognized for the first time the rights of traditional naturopaths to use the titles Doctor of Naturopathy and N.D. The law defines natural health care services as those that do not need to be regulated and that can be provided by practitioners who are not licensed as “naturopathic physicians.” Under the new law many traditional naturopaths would, depending on their education and training, have the right to use the titles Doctor of Naturopathy and N.D. The law also licenses naturopathic physicians to diagnosis, prescribe legend drugs, and perform minor office procedures.

ILLINOIS

Illinois is a new state to fight for natural health. Special interest groups are working to pass restrictive licensing legislation to restrict natural health freedoms. Senator Adeline Jay Geo-Karis, R-31, and Representative Angelo Saviano, R-77, each introduced bills to license naturopathic physicians to the detriment of the natural health community. Both bills died in committee and we expect new bills to be introduced in 2006.

MINNESOTA

Just when you thought things were on easy street for the natural health community in Minnesota, several bills were introduced that would adversely impact the natural health community. In addition, in the wake of budget fights, Representative Fran Bradley, R-29B, introduced House File 1422 which would have stripped funding for the State Office of Complementary and Alternative Medicine—shifting jurisdiction to the Attorney General to determine the proper licensing agency to investigate complaints. *The Coalition* opposed this move by the Legislature because complaints will be placed in the hands of persons not qualified to investigate.

Further, special interest groups were active in pursuing legislation to restrict the natural health community in the State. Senator Mae Moua, D-67, and Representative Neva Walker, D-61B, each introduced bills to license naturopathic physicians to the detriment of the natural health community. Both bills are still alive for the 2006 Legislative Session and we will continue to monitor and oppose them.

MISSOURI

The Missouri State Legislature entertained only one restrictive licensing bill this session. Representative Bob Dixon, R-140, introduced House Bill 554. The bill was scheduled to be heard in committee on two different occasions, but on both days the bill was pulled from the committee agenda. *The Coalition* opposed HB 554 and expects it to be reintroduced in 2006.

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico continues to be a hotbed of activity for restrictive licensing legislation. Representative Gail Beam, D-18, introduced House Bill 890, a bill to license naturopathic physicians. Representative Thomas Taylor, R-1, introduced House Bill 921, a bill to license naturopathic doctors. There was an attempt to combine the two bills into one, creating a two-tiered bill. This bill passed the House Health and Human Services Committee after it was mistakenly stated that all parties were in agreement. It later died in the House Appropriations Committee. *The Coalition* expects a new bill to be introduced in 2006.

NEW YORK

Assemblymember Michael Gianaris, D-36, introduced Assembly Bill 4404, The Freedom of Access Bill. *The Coalition* supports this bill and is assisting the NY Natural Health Project in its effort to pass it. The bill was placed on the agenda for the Committee on Economic Development, but was pulled days before as negotiations were underway. However, the session ended before the bill could be placed on a subsequent agenda. AB 4404 remains alive until the end of the 2006 session.

Senator Dale Volker, R-1, and Assemblymember A. Sam Hoyt, D-144, each introduced bills to license “naturopathic physicians,” Senate Bill 1614 and Assembly Bill 6712. SB 1614 was placed on an agenda for the Committee on Higher Education, but was pulled from the agenda by the sponsor on the day of the hearing due to overwhelming opposition. AB 6712 was never scheduled for a hearing. *The Coalition* will monitor actions and continue opposition on these bills.

NORTH CAROLINA

It’s been a long hot summer in North Carolina! The year began with the conclusion of the legislative study on whether naturopathic physicians should be licensed by the State. After several meetings in late 2004 and early 2005, the Joint Select Committee on Naturopathic Medicine could not reach an opinion on whether the state should license naturopathic physicians. Even though the Select Committee had no recommendation to the legislature regarding the licensure of naturopathic physicians, Senator Eleanor Kinnaid, D-23, introduced Senate Bill 1025, and Representative Dewey Hill, D-20, introduced House Bill 1234. Neither of these bills were heard in their respective committees. We expect these bills to be reintroduced in 2006.

On a brighter note, Representative Paul Luebke, D-30, reintroduced his freedom of access bill for natural health. The bill was heard by the House Committee on Health Care, and eventually it was recommended that the bill be converted into a study. Over the next several months, a joint select committee will be formed to determine if the State of North Carolina should have a Freedom of Access for natural health care. We will monitor and support this issue and hope that it is successful in 2006.

OHIO

Representative Linda Reidelbach, R-21, introduced House Bill 171, The Freedom of Access Bill. *The Coalition* supports the passage of this bill and is assisting the Health Freedom Coalition of Ohio in its effort to pass it. The bill remains alive until the end of the 2006 legislative session. *The Coalition* will monitor actions on the bill and continue to support it.

SOUTH CAROLINA

The Coalition saw renewed activity in South Carolina with dietitians seeking licensure and making nutritional counseling by others against the law. Senate Bill 103, sponsored by Senator Robert Hayes, Jr., R-15, passed the Senate late in the session this year and is currently in the House of Representatives. Because South Carolina has two year sessions, SB 103 is alive until the end of the session in 2006. We will continue to monitor and oppose this bill and others.

VIRGINIA

Virginia was another success for *The Coalition* in 2005. Dietitians made an aggressive push for exclusive licensure this session. Delegate Michele B. McQuigg, R-51, introduced the bill and it passed the House very quickly. The showdown was in a subcommittee of the Senate Education and Welfare Committee. After all testimony, the subcommittee voted 3-1 in opposition of HB 455. Many thanks to Clinton Miller, National Health Care Freedom Advocate, and Becky Hanks of the Virginia Chapter of Certified Natural Health Professionals for all of their efforts in opposition. The issue of dietetic licensure is expected to come up again in 2006, and we also expect a consumer health freedom bill to be introduced.

LOUISIANA

Congratulations to the Louisiana Health Freedom Coalition for the passage of Senate Bill 189—Freedom of Access Act—introduced and passed by Senator Sharon Weston-Broome, D-14. The bill allows practitioners who recommend the usage of or the sale of dietary supplements, food, or homeopathic remedies in conjunction with a consultation for a fee to disclose information, such as name, address, and education and training. Many thanks go out to Cynthia Reed and her colleagues for all of their hard work.

TEXAS

The Dietitians and Clinical Nutritionists were very active in Texas’ biannual regular legislative session with the introduction of exclusive licensing legislation. Representative Yvonne Davis, District 111, introduced House Bill 44, Representative Bill Zedler, District 96, introduced House Bill 191, Senator John Carona, R-16, introduced Senate Bill 989, and Senator Bob Deuell, R-2, introduced Senate Bill 1209. *The Coalition* opposed these bills and worked with other parties, like the Texas Complementary and Alternative Medical Association, to eventually defeat the bills. *The Coalition* expects bills like these to be reintroduced when the Texas Legislature returns in 2007.

The *Natural*
ADVOCATE

THE COALITION FOR NATURAL HEALTH, INC.

PROMOTING NATURAL HEALTH FREEDOM
PROTECTING NATURAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS

The *Coalition for Natural Health, Inc.* is a non-profit organization representing thousands of individuals nationwide that share a common goal: To promote natural health freedom and to protect natural health practitioners. Natural health products and therapies are experiencing unparalleled growth in the US. Increasingly, consumers are "voting with their feet" where access to natural health modalities is concerned. A recent survey in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* reported that 42 percent of Americans use alternative, natural therapies as part of their health care routine. Many consumers apparently recognize that the prevention of disease and the maintenance of good health is always a more cost-effective approach to healthcare than the necessity to cure a disease.

Where there is money there are special interest groups, and unfortunately natural health is no exception. Today special interest groups are working to influence state legislatures in order to enact public policy that promotes stricter regulations and licensing initiatives. The agenda of these self-serving groups is clear: to gain a proprietary advantage in the emerging natural health industry, thereby, eliminating much of the competition in the field. These actions create restrictive and exclusionary environments in which many traditional natural health providers and retailers lose the opportunity to compete fairly. Ironically, it was these traditional health practitioners and their customers who facilitated the industry's growth in the first place.

Since 1996, *The Coalition for Natural Health* has achieved many legislative victories in the fight for natural health freedom. Through grassroots organizing, educating legislators and the public about the benefits of natural health freedom, providing expert testimony at legislative hearings, and vigilant monitoring

of legislative activity in all 50 states, *The Coalition* has successfully defeated numerous bills that would have severely restricted natural health freedom. In addition, *The Coalition* has secured sponsors and directly promoted state legislative initiatives to proactively conserve natural health freedom.

Most recently, we were instrumental in the passage of Louisiana's Freedom of Access to Natural Health Products Act, one of the country's most progressive health freedom laws. This law exempts from the Medical Practices' Act practitioners who sell, use or recommend the usage of food, dietary supplements, and homeopathic remedies in conjunction with a consultation for a fee. *The Coalition* was also instrumental in the

passage of California's Freedom of Access Act, Minnesota's Complementary and Alternative Health Freedom of Access Act, and Rhode Island's Unlicensed Health Care Practices' Act. Using Rhode Island and California's laws as models, *The Coalition* is currently working actively in several states to pass comparable health freedom laws. It is *The Coalition's* ultimate mission to secure natural health freedom in all 50 states.

Inside, you will find updates from states where legislative activity occurred in 2005. More details inside...

WALKING THE WALK!

The Coalition for Natural Health, Inc. is the premier natural health advocacy group in the nation. *CNH* combines grassroots activism with professional lobbying expertise to produce effective legislative action. No other group comes close to matching *The Coalition's* accomplishments. Since its founding in 1996, *The Coalition* has worked to promote natural health freedom and protect practitioners' rights in more than 30 states:

- Testifying in state legislatures;
- Mobilizing grass roots support;
- Organizing effective lobbying campaigns;
- Building relationships with legislators and decision-makers.

The Coalition has been instrumental in the success of every natural health freedom law that has passed state legislatures since 1996. No other natural health organization can make that statement. We have also protected health freedom by defeating bills in more than 20 states that would have severely limited the rights of natural health practitioners.

Some people talk the talk. At *The Coalition* we walk the walk. If you believe natural health freedom is worth fighting for, join the most effective natural health action group in the United States. *Walk the walk with The Coalition for Natural Health.*

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