



## Template Language Guidelines for Providers During COVID-19 Pandemic

This document is intended to equip naturopathic doctors with language that sets appropriate expectations and understanding of naturopathic care as well as best practices for communicating with your peers, patients, and the public. This document has been developed by the [American Association of Naturopathic Physicians](#) (AANP) in conjunction with the [Institute for Natural Medicine](#) along with input from the [World Naturopathic Federation](#). Please read the following carefully and abide by these guidelines firstly, for the sake of patient care, secondly, because public health officials and regulating authorities are working hard to shut down overzealous claims and guarantees, and thirdly, overzealous claims and unsubstantiated guarantees jeopardize public health and state efforts to license naturopathic doctors, which are underway across the country.

### Template Language Guidelines for Providers to Public

- **DO** reaffirm, support, and share official public health guidelines and recommendations for social distancing, personal hygiene, and self-quarantine as needed. **This is imperative.**
- **Do NOT** make public statements in relation to COVID-19 that use the words:
  - **Prevent / Prevention**
  - **Treat / Treatment**
  - **Cure**
  - **Provide Immunity to/from COVID-19/coronavirus**

**Note:** At the time of this document's publication, there are no known preventive measures, treatment protocols, or cures specifically for COVID-19. Although there may be some correlations with how similar viral infections have been treated, and new information emerging from China and other countries, at this time, claims that you or naturopathic medicine can prevent, treat, or cure COVID-19 are considered false and misleading. Such claims could impede public health efforts, harm the profession by drawing negative attention, and could put your license in jeopardy.

- **Do NOT** monetize the emergency. The financial impact on many industries may be substantial; however, please be mindful of how you word your email updates/marketing communications in light of this pandemic.

- **Appropriate:** “The CDC has recommended that patients secure a three month supply of medications. Our practice has products in stock if you are running low & need refills.”
  - **Inappropriate:** “This product will boost your immunity to COVID-19 and is a must-have during this pandemic! Purchase now through our site.”
- **DO** frame your language from the perspective that naturopathic medicine has many tools to support patients. Use the following communication strategies:
  - Emphasize **general health promotion**
  - Provide **patient-centered care** that supports immune resiliency
  - Discuss **supportive care for symptom management of viral infections**
  - Discuss the importance of **self-care**
  - Offer **suggestions for managing anxiety** and other mental health concerns exacerbated by current events
  - Address **recovery** from illness
- **DO** support your patients’ care needs by continuing care of chronic diseases, pain, and anxiety/depression/insomnia that still need care and attention during this time, or may even be exacerbated by current conditions.
- **DO** adapt your care delivery to align with public health mandates and maintain clear lines of communication with patients on how you are available to support them - whether you have modified in-person clinic hours or [through telemedicine/telehealth](#).
- **DO** Check the AANP’s [COVID-19 Resource and Guidelines](#), which provide excellent clinical guidelines for naturopathic doctors written by naturopathic doctors.

### Addressing Inappropriate Claims

If you notice statements by a fellow colleague or another provider type/health professional with inappropriate, false, or misleading claims, consider the following steps in order of escalation:

- **Peer-to-Peer Accountability:**
  - Assume good intent of the person who is sharing the information. In a polite, professional manner, privately message the writer and state that you would like to provide them updated/correct information regarding their post or shared article. Offer the correct or updated language that has been sourced by an objective and authoritative body, such as the CDC, and attach the source’s link. Do not engage in arguments or unproductive conflict-oriented communication.
- **Flagging or Reporting Comments/Accounts:**
  - This should be reserved only for the circumstance that peer-to-peer accountability does not prove to be effective.
- **Notify State, Specialty or AANP Association:**

- If you notice the individual making this statement is associated with a specific organization or company, forward the statement and URL where the comment was found to that association. The association will decide on the next step, such as requesting a statement or link be retracted.

*During this national emergency, the AANP is making all resources on COVID-19 available to members and non-members. Please [click here](#) to access these resources and guidelines.*

**The AANP is here to help the community get through this together!**