



August 29, 2025

Robert F. Kennedy, Secretary of Human Health & Services
US Department of Health and Human Services
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Washington, D.C. 20201

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US Department of Education
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Subject: Partnering with HHS to Advance Whole-Health Through Nutrition — ND Education as a Ready Model

Secretary Kennedy, Secretary McMahon, and Colleagues:

We at the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) applaud your urgent call to action for comprehensive, measurable nutrition education across every stage of medical training. Your framing that nutrition is the most proven, powerful tool in preventing and reversing chronic disease deeply resonates with the core tenets of naturopathic medicine. As you reform medical education to meet this moment, it is vital that naturopathic physicians — long recognized as the nation’s clinical nutrition experts — be invited to contribute our expertise and be fully integrated into the healthcare system.

HOW ND EDUCATION IS ALREADY ALIGNED WITH YOUR VISION:

- [Naturopathic medical programs](#), accredited by institutions recognized by the United States Department of Education, deliver an average of [155 classroom hours of dedicated nutrition instruction](#), with some programs offering up to 220 hours within a rigorous 4-year, in-residence medical curriculum encompassing ~4,100 total training hours and over 1,200 clinical hours.
- This comprehensive training aligns fully with Secretary Kennedy’s values and priorities to operationalize the vision of prevention first, emphasizing nutrition, whole-health standards of care, and the demand for physician readiness to “guide patients on how to stay out of the operating room in the first place.”

- Naturopathic training is fundamentally whole-person health care, and nutrition is integrated with lifestyle, environmental, behavioral, and clinical dimensions. This mirrors the preventive, patient-centered care championed by Secretary Kennedy. We encourage you to review [Naturopathic Physicians as Whole Health Specialists](#).
- By contrast, as you noted, most MD programs offer only a fraction of this, often under twelve hours with some programs lacking any required clinical nutrition training.¹

SOLUTIONS TO ACHIEVE YOUR VISION:

1. Remove Barriers to Patient Access to NDs — today!

- a. Thousands of Naturopathic Doctors (NDs) are already trained and delivering the nutrition-focused, preventive care you envision, but patients face significant barriers to accessing NDs. We urge HHS to work internally, with Congress, and with other federal agencies to **remove federal barriers preventing coverage of naturopathic doctors in Medicare, Medicaid, the Department of Defense, and VA healthcare systems, while also addressing the patchwork of restrictive state licensing laws that limit patient access to qualified NDs.**
- b. Removing barriers must be the first priority, as it will inevitably take years for the conventional medical system to fully adopt and integrate a nutrition curriculum before they can even begin training medical doctors.

2. Educate: Curriculum and Competency Collaboration

- a. Accredited naturopathic medicine curriculum includes evidence based frameworks for managing patient care by applying the principles of therapeutic and clinical nutrition. This includes how to:
 - i. assess nutritional status through qualitative and quantitative methods;
 - ii. educate patients about general nutrition and food sources of nutrients;
 - iii. evaluate the safety and efficacy of nutritional interventions;
 - iv. prescribe nutritional substances based on indications, contraindications, bioavailability, food sources, potential interactions, and requirements for macro-nutrients, micro-nutrients, amino acids, prebiotics, probiotics, and accessory nutritional factors;
 - v. prescribe therapeutic diets, foods, and supplements to optimize patient well-being;
 - vi. prescribe therapeutic diets based on indications and contra-indications, access to food and supplements, patient preferences, and awareness of cultural and religious impacts on patient care.

¹ Adams, Kelly M., Butsch, W. Scott, Kohlmeier, Martin, The State of Nutrition Education at US Medical Schools, Journal of Biomedical Education, 2015, 357627, 7 pages, 2015. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2015/357627>

3. Demonstrate: Pilot & Evaluation Partnerships

- a. We offer access to naturopathic physicians and established Food as Medicine institutes who have worked for decades in real-world integration of nutrition and whole-health standards.
- b. Invite Naturopathic Physicians to develop and teach curriculum. Given our unmatched training in clinical nutrition, Naturopathic Physicians should be considered first-line faculty for nutrition and whole-health curriculum. HHS could quickly greenlight pilot pathways for ND-led clinical nutrition training in allopathic medical schools, further fostering collaboration and integration between disciplines.
- c. **Leverage Existing Federal Partnerships.** AANP staff, National University of Natural Medicine's (NUNM) Food as Medicine Institute, Dr. Jessyca Franco-Chavez (who worked on Secretary Kennedy's campaign and continues to work with various MAHA groups), and many other NDs have built relationships with various agencies in NIH focused on nutrition and integrative health and research. We encourage coordination between HHS, NIH, and these established relationships to accelerate implementation of nutrition-centered medical education reforms.

Request for a Briefing

We respectfully request a 30-minute briefing with your appropriate staff who are leading this effort to explore how Naturopathic Doctors and accredited ND medical programs can help HHS realize this vision, and to discuss immediate strategies for removing barriers to maximize access to Naturopathic Physicians who already implement the use of food as medicine every day, as conventional medical schools begin making changes.

Thank you for advancing a vision for medical education that prioritizes prevention, addresses chronic disease at its root, and empowers future physicians to nourish, not just treat. Naturopathic physicians are a ready workforce that can be deployed immediately. We look forward to collaborating with you to make this transformation real.

Sincerely,



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