



AANP Member Spotlight: Dr. Paloma DeFuentes ND, MD, DO



1. What started your pathway in naturopathic medicine?

I have been a licensed doctor for 40 years. I started as an MD since that is what my parents knew. Being an MD I saw the strengths and weaknesses in the profession and that led me to natural healing. Over the years my understanding has awakened more of what disease is. Ethical considerations have also played a part. How much can I interfere in a person's life? How much of the patient's symptoms are psychosomatic? Can I be content to cover up symptoms with drugs and other surface cures? So after my MD I went for a degree as a Naturopath and Osteopath in London and then I went again to school in the USA for

naturopathic medicine at the NCNM (today NUNM in Portland, OR). Why 3 medical degrees?

My purpose is to help humanity, to ease individual pain, to teach a better way of eating, of living, of thinking, of approaching problems and of approaching old age and death.

2. What do you like most about being a naturopathic doctor and what are some of your challenges?

Being a naturopathic doctor I can practice to be a healer, a compassionate being that does not prejudge the condition of others. A healer is a person who can connect to the heart of another but does not get drawn into his problems and pain. A healer keeps a cool mind and an open and warm heart. He maintains a positive mental attitude which provides an environment conducive to healing. He creates a bridge to health for his patient by maintaining a sense of wholeness for him. Thus, a healer is most effective when he holds the vision for his patient as healthy and whole.

I could not do that as an MD. I did not have the time to connect and listen to my patients. But I can do that as an ND.



I believe that in most cases disease is a lesson to learn. It can imply the breaking of the laws of nature (perhaps as simple as not enough sleep, or too many fatty foods) or it can be the sign of deeper non-physical imbalance. The sick person will usually be happy to learn and to change. And as he/she changes, he will be healed. I like it because the naturopathic way is the gentle way of healing, the surest way.

Challenges?

- 1) Standing alone as naturopathic physicians with so few of us licensed and so many other practitioners imitating the medicine and confusing the patients.....
- 2) The internet is a big challenge, giving information without discerning the sources they are using, and
- 3) People's lack of training on healthy living.

3. What makes your membership with AANP valuable as a naturopathic doctor?

I have been a member since I was a student at NCNM, in 1999, 21 years. I joined the association because I knew the importance of being together as doctors, to have a platform to grow. I think all doctors should join. The AANP has grown and become more active as the years have passed by. It puts our profession out on a platform in the public view that I certainly cannot do while in private practice. Requires expertise that I do not have. The members of the board of AANP also have love in their hearts to help the naturopathic profession.

I also belong to the local association of my state for similar reasons.
United we will win, divided we do not have a chance.

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