



WYOMING LEGISLATIVE SERVICE OFFICE

Research Memorandum

NATUROPATHIC DOCTOR TITLE REQUIREMENTS BY STATE

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QUESTION:

How do states regulating naturopathic doctors permit use of the term “physician” in naturopathic doctor title requirements?

SHORT ANSWER:

Naturopathic doctors have different educational requirements than doctors of medicine (MD) or doctors of osteopathy (DO). Among the 23 states regulating naturopathic doctors, nine states legally allow naturopathic doctors to use the title “naturopathic physician.” States may have additional requirements for naturopathic doctors, such as clearly communicating to patients the naturopathic doctor’s educational background and training. Among the states that do not include “naturopathic physician” in the state’s naturopathic doctor title requirements, several states further stipulate that naturopathic doctors may not use the term “physician” in their title.

NATUROPATHIC DOCTOR EDUCATION

Naturopathic doctors typically receive education through a four-year graduate-level degree program conferring a Doctorate in Naturopathy (ND) or Doctorate in Naturopathic Medicine (NMD).¹ Educational requirements for naturopathic doctors differ from the educational requirements of MDs and DOs in several ways, such as entrance exam requirements, residency completion time, and total clinical hours.² For tables summarizing educational differences between naturopathic doctors and MDs/DOs, see **Figure 1**.

¹ Greg Martin, *Education and Training: Family Physicians versus Naturopaths*, American Academy of Family Physicians, <https://www.aafp.org/dam/AAFP/documents/advocacy/workforce/gme/ES-FPvsNaturopaths-110810.pdf?&ms=ScopesFacebook> (last accessed July 24, 2025).

² *Id.*

Figure 1. Educational Differences Between Naturopathic Doctors and MDs/DOsDegrees Required and Time to Completion:

	Undergraduate Degree	Entrance Exam	School	Residency	Residency Completion Time
MD or DO	Standard 4-year BA/BS	Medical College Admissions Test (MCAT)	4 years	Required	3 years
Naturopathic Doctor	Standard 4-year BA/BS	None Required	4 years	Optional	1 year

Medical/Professional School and Residency/Post-Graduate Hours for Completion:

	Lecture Hours (Pre-Clinical Years)	Study Hours (Pre-Clinical Years)	Combined** Hours (Clinical Years)	Residency Hours	Total Hours
MD or DO	2700	3000	6000	9000-10,000	20,700-21,700
Naturopathic Doctor***	1500	1665	2600	535-1035	5505-6485
Difference	1200	1335	3400	8465-8965	15,195-15,215

**Clinical and lecture hours

***Naturopath “Lecture Hours” and “Combined Hours” are averaged across publicly-available curricula advertised on the web sites of the four CNME-accredited institutions of naturopathic study (Bastyr University, National College of Natural Medicine, Southwest College of Naturopathic Medicine, and the University of Bridgeport).

Source: American Academy of Family Physicians, *Education and Training: Family Physicians versus Naturopaths* (2022).

COMPONENTS OF NATUROPATHIC DOCTOR TITLE REQUIREMENTS

At least 23 states and Washington, D.C. regulate naturopathic doctors.³ The titles by which naturopathic doctors may legally refer to themselves vary by state. For a table of the permitted naturopathic doctor titles for each state regulating naturopathic doctors, see **Appendix A**. States regulating naturopathic doctors typically list multiple permitted titles for naturopathic doctors to use. Of the states regulating naturopathic doctors, nine states and Washington, D.C. include “naturopathic physician” as one of the permitted titles for naturopathic doctors. Some states,

³ American Association of Naturopathic Physicians, *Regulated States and Regulatory Authorities* (2024), <https://naturopathic.org/page/RegulatedStates>.

including Idaho, provide a limited list of permitted titles for naturopathic doctors.⁴ Other states, such as Arizona⁵ and Massachusetts⁶, have provisions that extend state title requirements to any other term that indicates or implies that a person is licensed to practice any form of naturopathic care. Several states, including Pennsylvania, require a naturopathic doctor using the abbreviation “Dr.” in their title to further identify themselves as a “naturopathic doctor.”⁷ Hawaii⁸ and Massachusetts⁹ permit naturopathic doctors to use the title “naturopathic physician” while also stipulating that licensed naturopathic doctors cannot use the title “physician” without clearly identifying themselves as a naturopathic physician.

Fourteen states do not include “naturopathic physician” as a permitted title for naturopathic doctors. Among the states that do not include “naturopathic physician” as a permitted title, several impose additional requirements for naturopathic doctor titles. For example, Colorado statutes require a naturopathic doctor to receive a written statement from a patient confirming the patient understands the naturopathic doctor is not a medical doctor or licensed physician before conducting an initial examination.¹⁰ Connecticut statutes require a license to use the title “naturopath.”¹¹ Several states that do not include “naturopathic physician” in their naturopathic doctor title requirements have additional language stating a naturopathic doctor cannot claim to be a “physician.” Alaska statutes indicate that a person practicing naturopathy may not “use the word ‘physician’ in the person’s title.”¹²

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact LSO Research at 777-7881.

⁴ Idaho Code § 54-5110(2).

⁵ Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 32-1555.

⁶ Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 112, § 273.

⁷ Pa. Code § 18.907(b).

⁸ Haw. Rev. Stat. §§ 455-9 and 455-11(15).

⁹ Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 112, § 273(b).

¹⁰ Colo. Rev. Stat. § 12-250-106(3)(b).

¹¹ Con. Gen. Stat. § 20-42.

¹² Alaska Stat. § 08.45.050.

Appendix A

Appendix A. Naturopath Title Laws by State

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Statute/Regulation
Alaska	1986	No	A licensee must disclose training and practice by using either: N.D. after the licensee's written name, or Dr./Doctor included with "doctor of naturopathic medicine." A person who practices naturopathy may not use the word "physician" in their title.	Alaska Stat. § 08.45.050 Alaska Admin. Code tit. 12, § 42.900
Arizona	1935	Yes	A license in naturopathic medicine is required to use the following titles: - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - N.M.D./N.D. - Doctor of Naturopathy - Naturopathic Physician - Or any other words leading the public to believe the individual is licensed to practice naturopathic medicine.	Ariz. Rev. Stat. § 32-1555
California	2003	No	A naturopathic doctor using the term "Dr." must further identify using the following: - Naturopathic Doctor - Licensed Naturopathic Doctor - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Doctor of Naturopathy - Naturopathic Medical Doctor Licensed naturopathic doctors may use the designation “N.D.” or other titles or words representing themselves as authorized to practice as a naturopathic doctor. A naturopathic doctor using the term/designation "Dr." cannot use any other term or designation to indicate the practice of medicine that is not naturopathic medicine unless otherwise licensed as a physician and surgeon, osteopathic doctor, or doctor of chiropractic.	Cali. Bus. & Prof. Code §§ 3660 and 3661

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
Colorado	2013	No	Before conducting an initial examination of a patient, a naturopathic doctor must receive a written statement from the patient confirming the patient understands the naturopathic doctor is not a medical doctor or a licensed physician. A person not registered as a naturopathic doctor cannot use the following titles: - Naturopathic Doctor - Doctor of Naturopathy - N.D. - Or any other title implying the person is licensed/registered as a naturopathic doctor.	Colo. Rev. Stat. §§ 12-250-106(3)(b) and 12-250-106(5)(c)
Connecticut	1920	No	Connecticut statutes require a license to use the title "naturopath."	Con. Gen. Stat. § 20-42
District of Columbia	2004	Yes	A licensed individual may use the following titles: - Doctor of naturopathic medicine - Naturopathic Physician - Licensed Naturopath - Naturopathic Doctor - Doctor of Naturopathy - Naturopath - The initials "ND"	D.C. Mun. Regs. tit.17, § 5210.1

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
Hawaii	1925	Yes	Only a licensed naturopathic physician may use the following titles: - Natureopath - Naturopath - Doctor of Naturopathy - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopathic Healthcare - Naturopathic Physician - Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopathy - Naturopathic Doctor - N.D. - Or any word or title to induce the belief that the person practices naturopathic medicine. Practitioners of naturopathic medicine cannot use the title "physician" without clearly identifying themselves as being a naturopathic physician.	Haw. Rev. Stat. §§ 455-9 and 455-11(15)
Idaho	2019	Yes	A license in naturopathic medicine is required to use the following titles: - Licensed Naturopathic Physician - Physician of Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopathic Medical Doctor - NMD Use of the following titles by unlicensed persons is not restricted: - Naturopath - Naturopathic Doctor - ND	Idaho Code § 54-5110(2)

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
Kansas	2003	No	A licensed naturopathic doctor must use "N.D." or the terms "Dr." or "Doctor" to identify themselves. Licensed naturopathic doctors may use the following titles: - Naturopathic Doctor - Doctor of Naturopathy - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopath A licensed naturopathic doctor may not use the following titles: - Physician - Naturopathic Physician - Naturopathic Medical Doctor	Kan. Stat. Ann. § 65-7211
Maine	1995	No	A person licensed to practice naturopathic medicine must use the title "naturopathic doctor." Naturopathic doctors have the exclusive right to use the following terms: - Naturopathic Doctor - Naturopathic - Naturopath - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Doctor of Naturopathy - Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopathic Health Care - Naturopathy - N.D. Naturopathic doctors are prohibited from using the title "physician."	Me. Stat. tit. 32 § 12521

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
Maryland	2014	No	Only individuals licensed to practice naturopathic medicine may use the following titles: - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Doctor of Naturopathy - Naturopathic Doctor - Naturopath - N.D./ND/NMD/N.M.D. A person licensed to practice naturopathic medicine may not practice or claim to practice as a medical doctor or physician unless licensed as such and may not use the title "physician."	Md. Code Ann. Health Occ. §§ 14-5F-14 and 14-5F-30
Massachusetts	2016	Yes	A license is required to use the following titles: - Naturopathic Physician - Naturopathic Practitioner - Natural Doctor - Naturopathic Doctor - Doctor of Naturopathy - Doctor of Natural Medicine - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - NMD/N.D. - Doctor of Nutritional Medicine - Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopath - Or any other term indicating the person is licensed in naturopathic medicine. A licensed naturopathic doctor shall not use the term "physician" or assume the character/appearance of a primary care provider.	Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 112, § 273

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
Minnesota	2008	No	Naturopathic doctors must obtain signed informed consent from patients indicating the naturopathic doctor's qualifications and scope of practice before or at the initial visit. Only registered naturopathic doctors may use the following titles: - Registered Naturopathic Doctor - Naturopathic Doctor - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - R.N.D./N.M.D. - Or any other titles indicating the individual is a registered naturopathic doctor. A naturopathic doctor cannot practice/claim to practice as a medical doctor, surgeon, osteopathic physician, or any other health care professional unless the naturopathic doctor also holds the appropriate license.	Minn. Stat. §§ 147E.05, 147E.06, and 147E.10
Montana	1991	Yes	A licensed naturopathic physician may use the prefix "Dr." or "Doctor" in their title. Only licensed naturopathic physicians may use the following titles or terms: - Doctor of Naturopathy - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopath - Naturopathic Physician - N.D. - Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopathic Health Care - Naturopathic - Naturopathy	Mont. Code Ann. § 37-26-401

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
New Hampshire	1994	No	Licensees must use the title "doctor of naturopathic medicine" and have the exclusive right to use the following terms: - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopathic Doctor - Naturopath - Doctor of Naturopathy - Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopathic Health Care - Naturopathy - N.D. Title restrictions apply to all persons representing themselves using any title including one or more of the above terms.	N.H. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 328-E:3
New Mexico	2019	No	Licensees must use the title "naturopathic doctor" and the abbreviation "N.D." Licensees have the exclusive right to use the following titles: - Naturopathic Doctor - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Doctor of Naturopathy - N.D./ND/NMD/N.M.D. Licensees may not represent themselves as a "naturopathic physician." The licensee may, however, represent themselves as a member of an organization with a name that includes "naturopathic physicians."	N.M. Stat. Ann. § 61-12G-10
North Dakota	2011	No	Licensed naturopaths may use the following titles: - Naturopath - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine with the abbreviation N.D. The North Dakota Board of Medicine may take disciplinary action against a licensee representing themselves as a physician.	N.D. Cent. Code §§ 43-58-03 and 43-58-11(2)(s)

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
Oregon	1927	Yes	Only licensees may use any of the following terms: - Doctor of Naturopathy - N.D. - Naturopath - Naturopathic Physician The Board of Naturopathic Medicine may impose penalties upon a licensee for "impersonating another physician."	Or. Rev. Stat. §§ 685.020 and 685.110

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
Pennsylvania	2016	No	Naturopathic doctors are required to have a license to use the following titles: - Naturopathic Doctor - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Registered Naturopathic Doctor - Or any other term implying the individual is a naturopathic doctor. A naturopathic doctor using the "Dr." designation must further identify themselves using "naturopathic doctor," "registered naturopathic doctor," or "doctor of naturopathic medicine." A naturopathic doctor may not use terms/designations implying the naturopathic doctor is authorized/licensed to practice medicine and: - Surgery - Dentistry - Podiatry - Optometry - Psychology - Nursing - Physical Therapy - Acupuncture - Chiropractic - Genetic Counseling - Athletic Training - Massage Therapy - Or any other health care profession unless appropriately licensed.	Pa. Code §§ 18.904 and 18.907

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
Rhode Island	2017	No	Individuals must be licensed to use the title of "doctor of naturopathy" or otherwise hold themselves out as a doctor of naturopathy. A licensee may not claim to practice as the following without a license: - Medical Doctor or Physician - Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine - Primary-Care Doctor - Primary-Care Practitioner - Primary-Care Provider - Primary-Care Naturopath - Dentist - Podiatrist - Optometrist - Psychologist - Advanced Practice Registered Nurse - Physician Assistant - Chiropractor - Physical Therapist - Acupuncturist - Any other healthcare professional unless licensed.	R.I. Gen. Laws § 5-36.1-4 and 5-36.1-5

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
Utah	1996	Yes	"Practice of naturopathic medicine" includes the use of the following designations: - Naturopathic Physician - Naturopathic Doctor - Naturopath - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Doctor of Naturopathy - Naturopathic Medical Doctor - Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopathic Health Care - Naturopathy - N.D./N.M.D. - Or any combination of designations that might cause a reasonable person to believe the designated individual is a licensed naturopathic physician.	Utah Code Ann. § 58-71-102(13)(c)
Vermont	1995	Yes	A licensed person may use the following designations: - N.D. - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopathic Doctor - Doctor of Naturopathy - Naturopathic Physician A license is required to use any letters or words implying a person is a naturopathic physician.	Vt. Stat. Ann. tit. 26, § 4122

State	Year of Naturopathic Licensure	Includes "Naturopathic Physician"	Language Used	Related Statute
Washington	1919	Yes	A license is required for a person to present themselves using the following terms/designations: - Naturopath - Naturopathy - Naturopathic - Naturopathic Physician - ND - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine A licensed naturopath may not use the term "chiropractic" to describe naturopathic services.	Wash. Rev. Code §§ 18.36A.030 and 18.36A.040.
Wisconsin	2022	No	Only a licensed individual may designate themselves as a naturopathic doctor/doctor of naturopathic medicine or use the following titles/terms: - Naturopathic Doctor - Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine - Doctor of Naturopathy - Naturopathic Medicine - Naturopathic Health Care - N.D./ND - Or any other titles or terms implying the individual is licensed/certified/registered as a naturopathic doctor or doctor of naturopathic medicine. Additionally, a person may designate themselves using the title "naturopath."	Wis. Stat. § 466.02

Source: Information compiled by LSO staff from current state statutes and regulations (July 2025).