

Naturopaths and Medical herbalists of New Zealand Response to the Primary Health Care Document

April 2019

What is your organization's official commitment/s to advancing primary health care?

Naturopaths and Medical Herbalists of New Zealand Inc. is committed to the right to primary healthcare for all and is actively progressing towards application for statutory regulation because we recognise that our contribution is currently limited due to marginalisation and being situated outside the arena of regulated health profession.

Socio-economically challenged individuals due to the out-of-pocket costs for naturopathic care are unlikely to use naturopathy currently in NZ and therefore an opportunity is lost to provide one-on-one education. Our organisation is hoping that through statutory regulation, potential funding opportunities such as private health insurance for the wider population and government targeted programmes for vulnerable populations will eventuate, meaning naturopaths can reach a wider sector of the population for preventative healthcare and health education resulting in increased self-empowerment for control of individual, family and community health needs.

Naturopathy and herbal medicine practitioners have the potential to play a more active role in integrative primary healthcare and health promotion, and as an organisation, we are currently in the process of increasing our education standards, accountability and risk management processes.

Naturopaths examine culture and the determinants of health and their impact on the individual. As a profession we focus on empowerment of individuals and their families as well as the community to enhance their wellbeing – through teaching self-help through good nutrition, use of herbal medicine, physical exercise, and mind-body practices to promote improved physical, mental and emotional wellbeing. These traditional methods resonate with many cultures and are aptly suited to healthcare in vulnerable populations.

What does primary health care mean to your organisation?

Naturopaths carry out primary healthcare with the public who directly consult naturopaths for health education, treatment and prevention. The approach taken by naturopaths is strongly educative, unpicking factors in an individual's life that are antagonistic to good health and emphasising factors that are conducive to good health. Using a process of informed decision making a treatment plan is created and then monitored and altered as necessary as the individual is empowered to take control of their health situation. Therapies such as nutrition, herbal medicine, homeopathy, aromatherapy, massage are used to alleviate acute and chronic indications. Naturopathy is a safe, effective, patient centred and has an emphasis on treating the whole person. In everyday acute situations therapies such as herbal medicine are used to support the body's natural innate ability to restore good health and to alleviate symptoms in the process reducing the need for medications such as antibiotics. Naturopaths are trained in pathophysiology, laboratory testing, health assessment and particularly red flags requiring referral to

a medical practitioner. They are also trained in herb-drug and nutrient-drug interactions and adverse event reporting.

What is your organization's vision and mission?

Mission Statement

- To enhance and promote human health and wellness of the people of Aotearoa/New Zealand using Naturopathic and Herbal Medicine.
- To promote high standards of proficiency and safe practice in the delivery of naturopathic and Herbal medicine.
- To advance the profession of Naturopathy and Herbal Medicine in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Vision Statement

- That all practising Naturopaths and Medical Herbalists in Aotearoa/New Zealand hold a *bona fide* professional qualification ratified by the Society.
- For integrative healthcare to be the model for the primary healthcare system of Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- The profession of Naturopathy and Herbal Medicine is a key component of public health and health promotion in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- For the profession of naturopathy and herbal medicine to be recognised and embraced in healthcare policy and development in Aotearoa/New Zealand.
- That the profession of Naturopathy and Herbal Medicine is regulated under the Health Practitioners Competency Assurance Act (2003) (HPCAA) and resourced by the government of Aotearoa/New Zealand for purposes of education, research and development of clinical practice.
- Naturopaths and Medical Herbalists will have career opportunities in a range of settings, including but not limited to, research, product development, marketing and sales, education, public health promotion and clinical practice.
- That higher education in Aotearoa/New Zealand provides for the development of naturopathy and herbal medicine and the profession.
- That services provided by Registered Naturopaths and Medical Herbalists (NMHNZ, Inc) are recognised by health insurance providers.