

American Association of Naturopathic Physicians

Naturopathic Medicine is Safe

Each year since 2013, the United States Congress has recognized the safety and efficacy of naturopathic medicine by designating the second week in October as Naturopathic Medicine Week. The resolution recognizes the “value of naturopathic medicine in providing **safe**, effective, and affordable health care” (emphasis added). Available data backs this assertion. The incidence of malpractice claims made against Naturopathic Doctors in jurisdictions where they are regulated is exceedingly low, especially as compared to allopathic physicians, and disciplinary action against Naturopathic Doctors is exceedingly rare.

Naturopathic medicine is well-established. Of 22 states and territories where Naturopathic Doctors are regulated, licensure in five of them dates back to 1935 or earlier; in the others, Naturopathic Doctors have been regulated an average of 17 years.

As just one example of the sterling safety record of the profession, Oregon has been licensing Naturopathic Doctors since 1924. With approximately 1,100 Naturopathic Doctors practicing there, Oregon reported a **total of 12** disciplinary actions in the last five years.

Similarly, a review of cases contained in Jury Verdicts Northwest’s database from September, 2005 to present revealed **NO cases against Naturopathic Doctors**.

In the last five years, seven of the 19 states that regulate Naturopathic Doctors report **ZERO disciplinary actions** against Naturopathic Doctors:

State:	Year of regulation:	Approximate # of regulated Naturopathic Doctors:	Total # of disciplinary actions against NDs in the last five years:
Alaska	1986	57	0
Connecticut	1920	319	0
Maine	1995	51	0
Minnesota	2008	58	0
Montana	1991	97	0
New Hampshire	1994	88	0
North Dakota	2011	7	0

Source: 2016 [Federation of Naturopathic Medicine Regulatory Authorities](#) survey.

California is one of the more recent states to license Naturopathic Doctors, yet they’ve been licensed long enough to provide an excellent example of the safety records of Naturopathic Doctors post-licensure. California passed its licensure law in 2003 and began licensing Naturopathic Doctors in 2005. California’s nearly 800 practicing Naturopathic Doctors have a pristine safety record:

- There have been **no cases of patient harm** caused by Naturopathic Doctors in California since the first licenses were issued in 2005.
- Of 16,925 medical malpractice payments totaling more than \$2.7 billion made in California from 2002-2012, **none of them** were attributed to Naturopathic Doctors.

(Sources: California Naturopathic Doctors’ Association, 2016; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Practitioner Databank).

Because of the exemplary safety record of Naturopathic Doctors, **malpractice insurance costs are low** for them. Average yearly malpractice premiums for Naturopathic Doctors practicing in full-scope states tend to be substantially lower – 30-40 percent less – than premiums for medical doctors and osteopaths.