The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians to Urge Congressional Support for Protecting Patient Access to Compounded Medications

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WASHINGTON (PRWEB) June 19, 2019 -- The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) recently hosted its annual DC Federal Legislative Initiative (DC FLI), June 8-10 at the Georgetown University Hotel & Conference Center. After a two day training, 150 licensed naturopathic doctors (NDs) and students descended on Capitol Hill to advocate on behalf of their patients for three priorities: Protecting Patient Access to Compounded Medications (H.R. 1959), the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment (MAT) Act (H.R. 2482), and joining the Congressional Integrative Health & Wellness Caucus.

Despite a long history of safe use and patient need, the FDA has blocked patient access to ingredients used in compounded medications and is in the process of reviewing and potentially blocking access to more than 300 compounded ingredients needed and used by hundreds of thousands of patients. Many are herbal medicines or naturally occurring substances. Licensed naturopathic doctors know that compounded medications are necessary for patients with conditions that make them resistant to mass-produced medicine. They can be lifesaving for:
1. Patients with allergies to common fillers and preservatives used to store and shelf mass-produced, commercially available drugs (lactose, gluten, or artificial dyes)
2. Children and adults with digestive issues who are not able to take medication orally
3. People who need customized dosage or strengths not available in mass-produced, commercially available drugs

Many patients and physicians have expressed concern over FDA restrictions. “My cancer patients need access to these compounded medications to improve quality of life and the outcomes for their diseases,” stated Eliot Edwards, ND, FABNO, and AANP board member.

In addition to preserving patient access to vital compounded medicines, the AANP urged Congress to sponsor H.R. 2482, the Mainstreaming Addiction Treatment Act. Because medical professionals need a special DEA waiver to prescribe buprenorphine to treat substance use disorder, this leads to treatment bottlenecks and a lack of providers. NDs are highly effective at treating pain with non-pharmacological approaches, and in several states also have authority to prescribe opioids and controlled substances in their scope of practice (OR, AZ, VT, CA). However, NDs are not currently eligible under federal law to apply for this DEA waiver. H.R. 2482 eliminates the redundant, outdated requirement that practitioners apply for a separate waiver to prescribe buprenorphine for substance use disorder treatment. If prescribing DEA Schedules III-V is in the scope of practice of naturopathic doctors as defined by state law, then they would be part of the solution to address America’s opioid crisis.

Health care in the U.S. is almost entirely oriented to treating patients once they are ill – most often through costly prescription drugs, invasive surgeries, and hospitalization. The DC FLI highlights that patient health benefits from being able to access providers like licensed naturopathic doctors who focus on disease prevention, often through non-pharmacological treatment options grounded in nutrition, lifestyle, and patient-centered care to restore health. The AANP, through the DC FLI, is working to educate members of Congress about the role licensed Naturopathic Doctors play in providing safe, effective, and affordable health care. To this end,
participants finished the day of lobbying with the AANP DC FLI Whole Health Reception, where participants demonstrate how food is a powerful medicine that plays a pivotal role in health.

In total, AANP DC FLI participants met with 80 Senate offices and 159 offices in the House of Representatives, resulting in 984 meetings (514 in the House and 470 in the Senate). These visits included meetings with the Chairs and Ranking Minority Members of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, House Committee on Ways and Means, House Committee on Judiciary, and Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee.

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About the AANP:
The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) is the professional association that represents licensed naturopathic physicians. The AANP strives to make naturopathic medicine available to every American, and to increase recognition of naturopathic physicians as the identified authorities on natural medicine. Learn more at [http://www.naturopathic.org](http://www.naturopathic.org).
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