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STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

JANUARY SESSION, A.D. 2026

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A N A C T

RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- LICENSE OF NATUROPATHY ACT
OF 2017

Introduced By: Senators Murray, and Urso

Date Introduced: March 04, 2026

Referred To: Senate Health & Human Services

It is enacted by the General Assembly as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Sections 5-36.1-2, 5-36.1-3, 5-36.1-4, 5-36.1-5, 5-36.1-6, 5-36.1-7, 5-36.1-
2 8, 5-36.1-9, 5-36.1-10, 5-36.1-11, 5-36.1-12, 5-36.1-14, 5-36.1-15, 5-36.1-16, 5-36.1-17 and 5-
3 36.1-18 of the General Laws in Chapter 5-36.1 entitled "License of Naturopathy Act of 2017" are
4 hereby amended to read as follows:

5 **5-36.1-2. Definitions.**

6 The following words and phrases as used in this chapter shall have the following meanings:

7 (1) "Approved naturopathic college" means a college that grants a degree of ~~doctor of~~
8 ~~naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor and:

9 (i) Is accredited by the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME), its successor
10 or other accrediting agency recognized by the United States Department of Education; or

11 (ii) Is accredited by any other organization approved by the board of licensure of
12 naturopathy.

13 (2) "Board" means the board of licensure of naturopathy.

14 (3) "CNME" or "Council" is the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education.

15 (4) "Department" means the Rhode Island department of health.

16 (5) "Director" means the director of the Rhode Island department of health.

17 (6) "Disciplinary action" means any action taken by an administrative law officer
18 established against a licensee or applicant on a finding of unprofessional conduct by the licensee

1 or applicant. “Disciplinary action” includes issuance of warnings and all sanctions including denial,
2 suspension, revocation, limitation, or restriction of licenses and other similar limitations.

3 ~~(8)~~(7) “Natural” means present in, produced by, or derived from nature.

4 ~~(7)~~(8) ~~“Doctor of naturopathy” means a person who practices naturopathic health care and~~
5 ~~is licensed pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.~~ “Naturopathic doctor” means a person who
6 practices naturopathic health care and is licensed pursuant to the provisions of this chapter.

7 (9) “Naturopathic health care” or “the practice of naturopathic health care” means a system
8 of health care that utilizes education, natural substances, and natural therapies to support and
9 stimulate a patient’s intrinsic self-healing processes and to prevent and treat human health
10 conditions and injuries.

11 **5-36.1-3. Scope of practice.**

12 (a) A license authorizes a licensee, consistent with naturopathic education and training and
13 competence demonstrated by passing the ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor licensing
14 examination, to:

15 (1) Order and perform physical and laboratory examinations for diagnostic purposes;

16 (2) Dispense or order natural substances of mineral, animal, or botanical origin, including
17 food, extracts of food, nutraceuticals, vitamins, amino acids, minerals, enzymes, botanicals and
18 their extracts, botanical substances, homeopathic substances, and all dietary supplements and
19 nonprescription drugs as defined by the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C. § 301 et
20 seq., that use various routes of administration, including oral, nasal, auricular, ocular, rectal,
21 vaginal, and transdermal;

22 (3) Administer natural substances of mineral, animal, or botanical origin, including food,
23 extracts of food, nutraceuticals, vitamins, amino acids, minerals, enzymes, botanicals and their
24 extracts, botanical substances, homeopathic substances, and all dietary supplements and
25 nonprescription drugs as defined by the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, 21 U.S.C. § 301 et
26 seq., using transdermal routes of administration;

27 (4) Administer or perform hot or cold hydrotherapy, electromagnetic energy, and
28 therapeutic exercise for the purpose of providing basic therapeutic care services, except that if a
29 referral to another licensed provider is appropriate for ongoing rehabilitation or habilitation
30 services, the ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor shall make the referral;

31 (5) Provide health education and health counseling; and

32 (6) Perform naturopathic musculoskeletal mobilization.

33 (b) If a ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor is engaged in the private practice of
34 naturopathy in the state, the ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor shall display the license

1 obtained pursuant to this section conspicuously in each office where the ~~doctor of naturopathy~~
2 [naturopathic doctor](#) is engaged in practice.

3 **5-36.1-4. Penalty for misrepresentation.**

4 No person who is not licensed as a ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ [naturopathic doctor](#) may use the
5 title of “~~doctor of naturopathy~~ [naturopathic doctor](#)” or hold themselves out as a ~~doctor of~~
6 ~~naturopathy~~ [naturopathic doctor](#). Any person who violates the provisions of this section shall be
7 punished by a fine of not less than two hundred dollars (\$200) nor more than five hundred dollars
8 (\$500), nor more than one year imprisonment, or by both the fine and imprisonment.

9 **5-36.1-5. Prohibited acts.**

10 A person licensed under this chapter shall not perform any of the following acts:

11 (1) Prescribe, dispense, or administer any legend medications or substances controlled
12 pursuant to the federal Controlled Substances Act, 21 U.S.C. § 812, and chapter 28 of title 21;

13 (2) Use, for therapeutic purposes, any device regulated by the United States Food and Drug
14 Administration (FDA) that has not been approved by the FDA;

15 (3) Perform surgical procedures;

16 (4) Practice, or claim to practice, as a medical doctor or physician, a doctor of osteopathic
17 medicine, a primary-care doctor, a primary-care practitioner, a primary-care provider, a primary-
18 care naturopath, a dentist, a podiatrist, an optometrist, a psychologist, an advanced practice
19 registered nurse, a physician assistant, a chiropractor, a physical therapist, an acupuncturist, or any
20 other healthcare professional unless licensed under this title;

21 (5) Use general regional or spinal anesthetics or procedural sedation;

22 (6) Administer ionizing radioactive substances for therapeutic or diagnostic purposes;

23 (7) Perform chiropractic adjustments or manipulations that include high-velocity thrusts at
24 or beyond the end range of normal joint motion unless the licensee is also a licensed chiropractor;

25 (8) Perform acupuncture unless the licensee is also a licensed acupuncturist;

26 (9) Advise patients regarding prescription drugs beyond possible dietary supplement/herb
27 — prescription drug interactions, [drug-induced nutrient depletions](#);

28 (10) Practice naturopathy in this state without a valid license issued in accordance with this
29 chapter; or

30 (11) Use, in connection with the person’s name, any letters, words, or insignia indicating
31 or implying that the person is a ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ [naturopathic doctor](#) unless the person is
32 licensed in accordance with this chapter. A person licensed under this chapter may use the
33 designation “~~DN~~” for ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ ["ND" for naturopathic doctor](#).

34 **5-36.1-6. Exemptions.**

1 Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to prohibit any of the following:

2 (1) The practice of a profession by a person who is licensed, certified, or registered under
3 other laws of this state and is performing services within the authorized scope of practice of that
4 profession.

5 (2) The practice of naturopathy by a student enrolled in approved naturopathic training.
6 The performance of services shall be pursuant to a course of instruction and under the supervision
7 of an instructor, who shall be a ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor licensed in accordance
8 with this chapter.

9 (3) The use or administration of over-the-counter medicines or other nonprescription
10 agents.

11 **5-36.1-7. Reporting contagious and infectious diseases.**

12 ~~Doctors of naturopathy~~ Naturopathic doctors are subject to the provisions of the law
13 relating to contagious and infectious diseases.

14 **5-36.1-8. Board of licensure — Creation.**

15 Within the division of professional regulation established in the department of health
16 pursuant to chapter 26 of this title there shall be created a board of licensure for ~~doctor of~~
17 ~~naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor.

18 **5-36.1-9. Board of licensure.**

19 (a) The director of the department of health, with the approval of the governor, shall appoint
20 a board consisting of five (5) persons, all residents of the state, to constitute a board of licensure
21 for naturopathy with the duties, powers, and authority as stated in this chapter, and that board shall
22 be composed of the following:

23 (1) Two (2) members who shall be licensed physicians under chapter 37 of this title who
24 have been actively engaged in the practice of medicine;

25 (2) One member who is a representative of the general public not employed in any health-
26 related field; and

27 (3) Two (2) members who shall be ~~doctors of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctors meeting
28 the qualifications for licensure under this chapter.

29 (b) Members shall be appointed for terms of three (3) years each. No member shall be
30 appointed to more than two (2) consecutive terms. Upon expiration of the term of office, a member
31 shall continue to serve until a successor is appointed and qualified.

32 (c) In their initial appointment, the director shall designate the members of the board of
33 licensure as follows: three (3) members to serve for terms of three (3) years; and two (2) members
34 to serve for a term of two (2) years.

1 (d) The director of the department of health may remove any member of the board for
2 cause.

3 (e) Vacancies shall be filled for the unexpired portion of any term in the same manner as
4 the original appointment.

5 **5-36.1-10. Board of licensure — Powers and duties.**

6 (a) The board shall administer and coordinate the provisions of this chapter; evaluate the
7 qualifications of applicants; supervise any examination of applicants deemed necessary;
8 recommend to the director the commencement of disciplinary hearings in accordance with chapter
9 35 of title 42 and the provisions of this chapter; and investigate persons engaging in practices that
10 violate the provisions of this chapter. The board shall investigate all persons and agencies engaging
11 in practices that violate the provisions in this chapter.

12 (b) The board shall conduct hearings of a nondisciplinary nature and shall keep the records
13 and minutes that are necessary to an orderly dispatch of business.

14 (c) The board, with the approval of the director of the department of health, shall adopt
15 rules and regulations necessary to carry into effect the provisions of this chapter and may amend
16 or repeal them.

17 (d) Regular meetings of the board shall be held at any time and places that the board
18 prescribes and special meetings shall be held upon the call of the chairperson; provided, that at least
19 one regular meeting is held each year.

20 (e) The conferral or enumeration of specific powers in this chapter shall not be construed
21 as a limitation of the general powers conferred by this section.

22 (f) The board shall recommend to the director for registration those persons meeting the
23 criteria stated by this chapter.

24 (g) The board shall recommend to the director the revocation or suspension of the
25 registration of any ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor who does not conform to the
26 requirements of this chapter or regulations adopted under this chapter.

27 (h) The board shall approve programs for continuing naturopathic education.

28 **5-36.1-11. Board of licensure — Organization and meetings — Compensation of**
29 **members.**

30 The board shall elect its own chairperson annually and shall meet at the call of the
31 administrator, the chairperson, or upon the request of two (2) or more members of the board. A
32 majority of seats filled shall constitute a quorum, one of whom must be a ~~doctor of naturopathy~~
33 naturopathic doctor. The board shall approve programs for continuing naturopathic education.
34 Board members shall serve without compensation.

1 **5-36.1-12. Qualifications for licensure.**

2 To be eligible for licensure as a ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor, an applicant
3 shall satisfy all the following:

4 (1) Have been granted a degree of ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor from an
5 approved ~~naturopathy~~ naturopathic college;

6 (2) Be physically and mentally fit to practice naturopathy with or without reasonable
7 accommodation;

8 (3) Pass an examination approved by the board;

9 ~~(4) Have in place a written collaboration and consultation agreement with a physician~~
10 ~~licensed under chapter 37 of this title. The collaboration and consultation agreement shall include~~
11 ~~the following:~~

12 ~~(i) The name and license number of the physician with whom the applicant has a~~
13 ~~collaboration and consultation agreement;~~

14 ~~(ii) A statement that the applicant will refer patients to and consult with physicians and~~
15 ~~other licensed healthcare providers; and~~

16 ~~(iii) A statement that the applicant will require patients to sign a consent form that states~~
17 ~~that the applicant's practice of naturopathy is limited to the scope of practice identified in § 5-36.1-~~
18 ~~3.~~

19 (4) Agree to refer patients and consult with other licensed healthcare providers, when
20 medically indicated; and

21 (5) Applicants agree to have patients sign a consent form that states the applicant's practice
22 of naturopathy is limited to the scope of practice identified in § 5-36.1-3.

23 **5-36.1-14. Biennial license renewal — Continuing education.**

24 (a) The license to practice naturopathy shall be renewed every two (2) years by filing a
25 renewal application on a form provided by the director. The application shall be accompanied by
26 the required fee and evidence of compliance with subsection (b).

27 (b) As a condition of renewal, a ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor shall complete
28 a program of continuing education, approved by the director, during the preceding two (2) years.
29 The director shall not require more than thirty (30) hours of continuing education biennially.

30 **5-36.1-15. Unprofessional conduct.**

31 The following conduct, and conduct set forth by the department of health, by a person
32 licensed under this chapter or an applicant for licensure constitutes unprofessional conduct:

33 (1) Failing to use a complete or accurate title in professional activity;

34 (2) Failure to conform to the provisions of the collaboration and consultation agreement;

1 (3) Acts of gross misconduct in the practice of their profession or gross or repeated
2 malpractice or the failure to practice naturopathy with the level of care, skill, and treatment that is
3 recognized by a reasonably prudent similar ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor as being
4 acceptable under similar conditions and circumstances;

5 (4) Harassing, intimidating, or abusing a patient;

6 (5) Agreeing with any other person or organization, or subscribing to any code of ethics or
7 organizational bylaws, when the intent or primary effect of that agreement, code, or bylaw is to
8 restrict or limit the flow of information concerning alleged or suspected unprofessional conduct to
9 the board;

10 (6) Abandonment of a patient;

11 (7) Gross overcharging for professional services on repeated occasions, including filing of
12 false statements for collection of fees for which services were not rendered;

13 (8) Sexual harassment of a patient;

14 (9) Engaging in an inappropriate sexual act with a patient;

15 (10) Willful misrepresentation in treatments;

16 (11) Practicing naturopathy in an area or areas of specialty in which the licensee is not
17 trained to practice.

18 **5-36.1-16. Refusal or revocation of a license — Process.**

19 (a) The division of professional regulation of the department of health may, after notice
20 and hearing, in its discretion, refuse to grant the license provided for in this chapter to any ~~doctor~~
21 ~~of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor who has violated any of the laws of the state affecting the ability
22 of any ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor to practice naturopathy, or who had been guilty
23 of unprofessional conduct or conduct of a character likely to deceive or defraud the public, and
24 may, after notice and hearing, revoke or suspend any license issued or granted by it for like causes
25 or for any fraud or deception committed in obtaining the license.

26 (b) The division of professional regulation of the department of health may refuse to accept
27 the return of a license tendered by the subject of a disciplinary investigation and may notify relevant
28 state, federal, and local agencies and appropriate bodies in other states of the status of any pending
29 or completed disciplinary case against the licensee, provided that notice against the licensee has
30 been served or disciplinary action against that person has been taken.

31 (c) The division of professional regulation of the department of health shall serve a copy
32 of its decision or ruling upon any person whose certificate has been revoked or refused.

33 (d) The burden of proof in a disciplinary action shall be on the state to show by a
34 preponderance of the evidence that the person has engaged in unprofessional conduct.

1 **5-36.1-17. Complaints.**

2 (a) Any person may report to the division of professional regulation in writing any
3 information the person has reason to believe indicates that a ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic
4 doctor is, or may be, medically or legally incompetent; engaged in the unauthorized practice of
5 naturopathy; guilty of unprofessional conduct; or mentally or physically unable to engage safely in
6 the practice of naturopathy.

7 (b) Upon receiving a credible complaint or report concerning a licensee, or on its own
8 motion, the division of professional regulation may investigate any evidence that appears to show
9 a licensee may be medically incompetent; guilty of unprofessional conduct; or mentally or
10 physically unable to engage safely in the practice of naturopathy.

11 (c) Within ten (10) days of receipt thereof, the division of professional regulation shall
12 acknowledge receipt of all reports required by this section and any complaint against a licensee.
13 Within ten (10) days thereafter, the division shall inform any person or entity whose report has
14 resulted in action by the division of the final disposition of the matter.

15 (d) Any person aggrieved by the decision or ruling of the department of health, or of the
16 division of professional regulation, in regard to any of the provisions of this chapter, may appeal to
17 the superior court in the manner provided for in chapter 35 of title 42.

18 **5-36.1-18. Informed consent and disclosure.**

19 Prior to initiating treatment by a ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor each patient
20 must read and sign a disclosure statement containing the following information:

21 (1) Rhode Island does not recognize ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctors as primary-
22 care providers and a ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctor is not responsible for the overall
23 medical care of any patient.

24 (2) Naturopathic care is intended only as an adjunct to, and not a substitute for, medical
25 care from a physician, physician assistant (PA), or advanced practice registered nurse (APRN), and
26 ~~doctor of naturopathy~~ naturopathic doctors shall coordinate patient care with physicians and other
27 healthcare providers.

28 (3) Patients are urged to have a primary-care provider and to have all specialty care
29 provided by a properly credentialed physician specialist.

30 (4) ~~Doctors of naturopathy~~ Naturopathic doctors are not licensed to prescribe drugs or to
31 advise patients regarding prescription drugs beyond possible drug-induced nutrient deficiencies,
32 possible dietary supplement/herb — prescription drug interactions. All questions regarding
33 prescription medications should be directed to the prescriber or to the patient’s primary-care
34 provider or licensed registered pharmacist.

1 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon passage.

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EXPLANATION
BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
OF
A N A C T
RELATING TO BUSINESSES AND PROFESSIONS -- LICENSE OF NATUROPATHY ACT
OF 2017

- 1 This act would change the naming of doctor of naturopathy to naturopathic doctor within
- 2 this chapter.
- 3 This act would take effect upon passage.

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