



AANP

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 24, 2012

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Includes Naturopathic Doctors in Indian Health Service Loan Repayment Program

HHS Recognizes Licensed Naturopathic Doctors as Eligible Providers

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) issued a federal register notice on January 23, 2012, defining eligibility for participation in the Indian Health Service (IHS) loan repayment program. HHS has the authority to determine the specific health professions for which loan repayment contracts will be awarded, based on the expressed needs of the IHS, American Indians and Alaskan Natives. For the first time, HHS has included licensed naturopathic doctors on the list of "priority health professions." Graduates of accredited naturopathic medical schools may now pursue this opportunity to provide services to meet the needs of this at-risk population.

"After more than nine years, hundreds of Congressional visits, thousands of letters to Congress and the Agency as well as personal meetings with Agency officials, it's finally happened," said Karen Howard, former American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) Executive Director. "This paves the way for inclusion in all federal loan repayment programs and is a significant step towards equity in education for naturopathic students. I can't tell you how overjoyed I am."

AANP President Dr. Michael J. Cronin praised the hard work of the naturopathic community in achieving this goal. "Congratulations to all the NDs and naturopathic students who worked long and hard by participating in the DC Federal Legislative Initiative (DC FLI), sending letters to and visiting their Congress members and for supporting the AANP."

The full announcement from the Department of Health and Human Services, entitled "Loan Repayment Program for Repayment of Health Professions' Educational Loans," is available through the Government Printing Office online [here](#).

Naturopathic Medicine, as defined by the U.S. Department of Labor is to "diagnose, treat, and help prevent diseases using a system of practice that is based on the natural healing capacity of individuals. May use physiological, psychological or mechanical methods. May also use natural medicines, prescription or legend drugs, foods, herbs, or other natural remedies." Naturopathic doctors train at four-year, post-graduate naturopathic medical schools that are accredited by an agency of the United States Department of Education. Sixteen states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands regulate naturopathic medicine. Learn more at naturopathic.org.

###

The American Association of Naturopathic Physicians is a professional association that strives to make naturopathic medicine available to every American and to increase recognition of naturopathic physicians as the identified authorities on natural medicine.