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Editors, Times Colonist  
2261 Douglas St.  
Victoria, BC, V8T 4M2

Dear Editors,

In response to the March 10 letter to the editor from Heidi Oetter, I am writing to clarify the education and training that naturopathic doctors (NDs) receive regarding pharmaceutical treatments.

I'd invite the registrar to review the MD curriculum and compare it with the ND curriculum. Published data shows that science education for NDs meets or exceeds that which MD's receive. Given that this data is easily verifiable, it baffles me why Dr. Oetter would assert otherwise, unless she is knowingly out to deceive.

In brief, naturopathic physicians' education includes at least three years of pre-medical training followed by four years of full-time study at an accredited naturopathic college. Naturopathic students receive more training in basic and some clinical sciences at accredited naturopathic colleges than students who attend standard medical schools. All students of naturopathic medicine take several courses that require them to learn about prescription drugs and how they can be used to treat patients safely.

Further, our regulatory board, the College of Naturopathic Physicians of British Columbia, has developed a comprehensive and rigorous ongoing competency program in consultation with the Ministry of Health and a multi-disciplinary committee which includes pharmacists and medical doctors.

If Dr. Oetter is so certain that NDs are unqualified to prescribe we would openly challenge her to take the board exams all NDs must pass in order to prescribe.

As your readers will know from the March 7 article by the Times-Colonist reporter Katherine Dedyne, there have been no adverse incidents reported by patients regarding NDs prescribing medications, whether in British Columbia or in any other North American jurisdiction. It's disingenuous for MDs to brazenly infer otherwise.

The ministry undertook rigorous due diligence before arriving at this modification to scope of practice which is an enormous improvement for patient care and for which there is widespread precedent in other jurisdictions. To infer the decision was made without such attention to detail is an insult and an affront to the minister of health, his staff and the myriad health professionals who worked collaboratively on the advancement.

Naturopathic doctors in British Columbia are pleased that the provincial government has recognized that patients want increased choice in the delivery of their health care. We look forward to continuing to provide high-quality, science-based health care to hundreds of thousands of British Columbians each year and helping them manage their prescription medications.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Christoph Kind, BCNA President