

# ASSOCIATION SPOTLIGHT



The following questions were asked of naturopathic organizations throughout North America in an effort to share visions; promote, support and inspire licensure efforts in unlicensed states; and join forces where possible. If your association has not been contacted to participate in this column, contact Julie LeBlanc, managing editor, at editor@ndnr.com, or 262-392-3988.

## Interview with Jeremiah Stevens, NMD, IDAANP president

**What is your mission statement?** The IDAANP is a voluntary membership organization whose purpose is:

- To cultivate an environment in which naturopathic medicine is widely recognized, supported and accessible in Idaho.
- To advance NMDs as independent primary care physicians who specialize in natural medicine and preventive health care.
- To partner with other medical groups and healthcare interests to bring safe and effective health care to citizens of Idaho.

**What are your goals for the next three years?** Our goals are to:

- Fully implement the Naturopathic Physicians Licensing Act that was passed in 2005. We have been working for the past three years to ensure that the highest

standards for education and qualification for licensure are upheld. We have consistently supported CNME and NPLEX for educational and testing standards for licensure. We continue to stand for federally recognized educational standards and see ourselves as advocates for protecting public health.

- Continue to build a self-supporting organization that is financially feasible and able to work toward our mission.
- Increase our current membership. As Idaho's population grows, we encourage newly graduated CNME-educated NMDs to relocate or return to Idaho to practice. Overall, Idaho is a great place to live and to practice.

**What current projects is the association working on?** We have three committees that are actively working on projects:

- Legislative committee. With the help of an incredible lobbying team, the legislature amended the Naturopathic Licensing Act to allow members of the IDAANP to serve on the Idaho Board of Naturopathic Medical Examiners.
- Fundraising committee. This committee works continuously to build individual and corporate relationships that will help to put our association on a strong financial footing for the future. We have

several expenses (i.e., lobbyists and legal fees) that need to be funded.

- Public relations committee. This committee created our website at [www.idaanp.org](http://www.idaanp.org) and is currently working on putting together our annual meeting in the fall with guest speakers.

**What obstacles are you contending with as you work to meet your goals?** The main obstacle that we have faced is some natural healthcare practitioners attempting to lower the standard for licensure. Idaho is in somewhat of a unique situation in that a 1950s Idaho Supreme Court decision recognized the profession of naturopathy and allowed practitioners to practice to the level of their training. Because of this, there are many more non-CNME naturopaths practicing in this state than CNME (or era-appropriate) graduates. Our bill was a compromise that licensed qualified practitioners as NMDs while allowing those who have been practicing as naturopaths to continue to do so without the privileges of licensure and to be allowed to use the title of naturopath. Our challenge is how to provide high standards for the practice of naturopathic medicine without disenfranchising those who have been allowed to practice in Idaho with no standards.

Consequently, educating the public on the difference between a licensed NMD vs. a naturopath has become very important.

**As president or director, what do you most want to accomplish?** My main hope is to see a functioning licensing board that is able to promulgate rules that fit within the statute. It has been three years since our licensing statute was passed, and we still do not have rules in place that clearly delineate who is to become licensed. Many members, who are licensed in other states, still do not have a license.

**What methods will you use?** We will continue to work closely with our lobbyists, key legislators, the governor's office and the attorney general's office to ensure that the spirit of the licensing act is accomplished. We will work to continue to develop sources of revenue from individuals and corporations to support our mission. We will keep working to educate the public through events and media outlets about what naturopathic medicine is and how it can help serve the healthcare needs of the citizens of Idaho.

**What is the most challenging part of your job?** To continually witness individuals who are trying to lower the standard for our profession. After working hard to attend four years of college and four years of naturopathic medical school and take challenging licensing exams, it is frustrating to see individuals attempt to take shortcuts to licensing.

**In what ways within, and from the greater ND community, do you receive support?** We have a small but highly dedicated group working hard on

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The FNM Project has its academic home at NCMN in Portland. NCMN's commitment to the project through its Partners Program has been important to the long-term strength of FNM as a catalyst for professional formation.

Foundations of Naturopathic Medicine Project  
Codifying our knowledge.  
It's time.



## FNM Friends Share Insights on Global Health Promotion

*Editor's note: As part of its contract agreement with FNM, NDNR will on occasion include interviews of the FNM Project's top sponsors in the news section. NDNR did not solicit, write or participate in the creation of this interview.*

As networking among natural medicine professionals heats up during this month's joint AANP/AHMA convention, the Foundations of Naturopathic Medicine (FNM) Project continues to gather sponsors who are helping expand the international naturopathic medical community and reform global health care. Recently, Jeffrey Bland, PhD, chief science officer of Metagenics, the FNM Vital Force sponsor, along with several FNM team members considered these movements and FNM's role in working to bring them about.

With the support of generous *Friends of the Foundations* FNM's hallmark of scholarship, demonstrated in its forthcoming textbook and subsequent recurrent international symposia, is unifying NDs from the U.S., Canada, U.K., Australia and Nicaragua with hopes of broadening that range. Intellectual dialog, collaborative scholarship and commitment to codifying the medicine's fundamental philosophy, theory and principles are cutting across oceans, cultures and politics. The well over 250 contributors to this

project are committed far beyond publishing a textbook of naturopathic medicine. They see FNM's work as a movement engaged in weaving a worldwide web of naturopathic primary care medicine of such a force that health creation will displace disease management. "Our role as international editors," offers Don Warren, ND, CNME agency liaison and past president, "is to bring the rich history, philosophy and culture of naturopathic medicine from our individual countries into the mosaic of a worldwide movement, making the textbook a broader, more representative resource."

Well-matched, FNM and Metagenics both ultimately seek to improve global health. Metagenics, working in 22 countries, is philosophically consanguineous with naturopathic medicine; all of the company's leaders have been "born out of a naturopathic soil." Since its inception in 1983, the company has committed to the prescient tagline: "Genetic Potential Through Nutrition." Ahead of its time then, they are now at the forefront of the nutrigenomic era, as Dr. Bland highlights, "where chronic illness is known to be a manifestation of the inappropriate interaction between a person's genetic uniqueness and their environment" – nutrition, lifestyle, air, water, energy and psychosocial.

As the principles and theoretical basis of Metagenics' research and product creation gains increasing credibility in the larger medical science community, FNM's textbook and call for scholarship lays essential groundwork for naturopathic medicine to gain credibility as a primary vehicle for disseminating natural health care. "The principles of naturopathic

medicine," says Iva Lloyd, ND, FNM agency liaison and CAND chair, "bring a sense of reason and logic to health care." Acceptance of nutrigenomics in chronic illness is "not only going to vindicate naturopathic medicine," says Dr. Bland, "but it is going to make natural medicine the centerpiece and the new healthcare delivery system."

Naturopathic medicine and its allies are making headway on several other fronts as well to influence healthcare reform. Tabatha Parker, ND, FNM agency liaison and co-founding medical director of Natural Doctors International (NDI), has led the organization since 2003 in bringing free natural healthcare services to underserved communities worldwide. NDI offers volunteer medical rotations for licensed NDs and other alternative medicine primary care providers. Their website exclaims, "The world of global naturopathic medicine is expanding every day and our dream of creating an international public health organization led by naturopathic physicians ... has come true."

Kavita Sharma, ND, associate dean and FNM CCNM college liaison, has been witness to increasing numbers of students and alumni volunteering in other countries, spreading naturopathic medicine. In the future, Dr. Sharma envisions clinics built in rural India where ND volunteers can spread their knowledge to whole families and communities.

Stop Chronic Disease.com, another global healthcare reform campaign due out this fall, will showcase personal stories of people having healed from a chronic disease naturally. Brainchild of Jeffrey Katke, Metagenic's CEO and board chair, this website will post several



behalf of naturopathic medicine in our state. Many members spend several hours a week voluntarily working for our association. We regularly have phone conferences. We also have had several in-person meetings in the past year. Without the hard work of many of our members, we would not have accomplished what we have in the past few years.

We also are very supported by the AANP and larger naturopathic community. Karen Howard Lise Alschuler, ND and David Matteson have been invaluable resources. Also, numerous supplement companies, diagnostic labs and individual doctors have generously given financial support.

**What do you think naturopathic medicine's role is in your region and how do you see that furthering the medicine globally?**

Idaho, like much of the rest of the country, is experiencing a healthcare crisis. Medical costs have gone through the roof, numerous patients do not have insurance, and very little preventive medicine is occurring. Naturopathic medicine offers a great alternative and/or complement to the conventional medical choices in our state. By clearly indicating who is qualified to be licensed, our profession can take a large step forward into integrating itself into the conventional medical system. Integrative care is the future of healthcare in this country and globally, giving patients the benefits of numerous practitioners working together achieve optimal health.

**What sort of inroads have you made politically within your local government?**

We have worked hard to develop strong relationships with the governor's office and key legislators. Our strongest ally has been our lobbyists, who are well connected and highly respected. These relationships have helped in the passage of our licensing act in 2005 and our recent amendment this spring, and will continue to help us as we move forward in filling vacancies on the licensing board and promulgating rules.

**Do you have any particular stories that highlight the accomplishments of your association?**

Our primary accomplishment has been the most recent amendment to our licensing act. The original Naturopathic Licensing Act was passed in 2005 with educational standards inherently implied but not explicitly stated. The Idaho Bureau of Naturopathic Medical Examiners (IBNME) was given the task of promulgating rules that further defined the statute. However, in the three years since the statute was passed the IBNME has not been able to write rules acceptable to the three governors in power since 2005, nor to the Senate Health and Welfare committee. The IBNME's proposed rules have been significantly lower than the national standards for education and testing used by every other state that licenses NMDs. If these rules had been approved, the door would have been opened for allowing licensure to practitioners who have not completed four-year medical training nor taken national board exams. Very

likely, persons with diploma-mill mail-order degrees would have been able to qualify for a license to practice naturopathic medicine in the state of Idaho. As licensure allows for minor surgery and pharmaceutical prescription rights, the IDAANP has consistently opposed the lowering of standards for naturopathic licensure. We have continually held the position that the standards for licensing NMDs in Idaho should be similar to the standards in all other licensed states.

This year, an amendment to our licensing statute proposed to correct the law to clearly indicate educational and testing standards for licensure. After some amending, it passed the House and was signed into law by Governor Otter. Three primary changes are now in place:

- When a vacancy exists on the IBNME, the governor sends a letter to both state associations, the IDAANP and the IANP (which is composed predominantly of graduates from non-CNME schools), asking for nominations for the position. The governor then can appoint an individual.
- The members of the IBNME serve at the pleasure of the Governor. This translates into allowing the Governor to appoint and remove members of the IBNME without restriction, which should help improve the overall functioning of the licensing board.
- The next IBNME board has until next legislative session to promulgate rules that fit the current statute. The rules must be approved by the Governor (as temporary) and the legislature (as per-

manent). No new licenses can be issued until at least temporary rules are approved. If no rules are approved by the next session, a bill will probably come forward to repeal our statute.

What this means:

IDAANP members can now be appointed to the IBNME, and the IBNME has the potential to write rules that align with the original intent of the Naturopathic Licensing Act.

**Please add anything else you feel is relevant.** We have made dramatic steps in the past session, but the hard work is ahead of us. The progress made this year is a testament to the fact that money is well spent and everyone's voice is important. As we move forward, we still face many challenges. We will most likely have the need of legal assistance in the rule-making process. We are continuing to work on building a quality association and creating association-corporate relationships. At this point, we are asking doctors, individuals and corporations to stand with us and support us in our efforts to improve the situation here in Idaho. We are in a crucial window for our profession in this state. We have an opportunity to fully implement our licensing law. There is also the very real possibility of lowering standards and even the loss of our bill. We also must acknowledge that what happens here in Idaho has national implications. We are asking for assistance in what we are doing here.

Contact information: IDAANP, 208-338-0405; info@idaanp.org; www.idaanp.org.

thousand patient videos from many countries.

Dedicated to naturopathic medicine's global expansion and influence through scholarship, FNM's project to codify the medicine is one branch of a multifaceted movement to bring natural medicine to the center of an inevitable healthcare reform whose truth and timeliness insist it prevail. Having worked closely in the 1970s with its "rugged, individualist separatists," Dr. Bland recognizes that almost 40 years later the naturopathic profession has accumulated "diverse talents, people who are seeing the value of working together, forming a culture." Encouraging a rising tide, the Foundations Project is creating opportunities to affiliate and grow so that

doctors who thought they were an island can recognize they are connected by endless waterways.

"It's time," says Paul Orrock, ND, DO, Australian associate editor and program coordinator at Southern Cross University, "to be coherent, scholarly and progressive about our wonderful medicine."

Contact FNM at foundationsproject@comcast.net (www.foundationproject.com) or 206-517-5632 for more information. For NCNM (www.ncnm.edu), FNM's academic home, contact Susan Hunter, associate VP advancement at shunter@ncnm.edu. — *Kate Williams, MA*

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