



COLLEGE OF
NATUROPATHIC PHYSICIANS
OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

GUIDELINE

Requisitioning laboratory tests and interprofessional practice

It has come to the College's attention that from time to time, a naturopathic doctor may suggest that a patient undergo laboratory or other diagnostic testing or imaging that may only be requisitioned by a medical doctor. In addition, a naturopathic doctor may wish to mention to a patient that a test or tests recommended by the naturopathic doctor could be covered by MSP benefits if requisitioned by a medical doctor.

In such cases, the naturopathic doctor should bear in mind that medical doctors, like naturopathic doctors, must apply their own clinical judgment to determine whether to requisition a test for a patient. Should a naturopathic doctor wish to request that a patient's medical doctor requisition diagnostic tests or imaging for a patient, the naturopathic doctor should ensure that s/he engages in good interprofessional practice. Interprofessional communication should take place directly; a patient should not be an intermediary in the dialogue between naturopathic doctor and medical doctor. A naturopathic doctor who wishes for his or her patient's medical doctor to requisition a test should:

1. Explain to the patient that both naturopathic and medical doctors must perform their own assessments and apply their own clinical judgment independently to a patient's condition before requisitioning tests. Clinical judgment may vary even between two professionals in the same healthcare profession, and variation may be greater among members of different healthcare professions. For that reason, it would be unfair to the patient and his or her medical doctor, and poor interprofessional practice, for a naturopathic doctor to raise an expectation in his or her patient's mind that the patient's medical doctor will requisition tests recommended by a naturopathic doctor without question.
2. Obtain his or her patient's consent to write to the patient's medical doctor explaining his or her opinion as to the need for a test. The naturopathic doctor may wish to include a copy of this policy with the letter and reiterate that s/he understands that the medical doctor will apply his or her own clinical judgment to the question of whether the suggested tests are necessary, and that this has been explained to the patient.

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