

Practice Standard

Novel Infections & Diseases

Practice Standards are legally enforceable standards which set out requirements related to specific aspects of naturopathic doctors' practices. Practice standards are provided for under s.19 of the Health Professions Act. They link with other standards, policies, and bylaws of the College of Naturopathic Physicians of BC, and all legislation relevant to the practice of naturopathic medicine.

Introduction

This standard is to set out the requirements and restrictions for the discussion and treatment of patient presenting with novel viruses and diseases.

Definitions

Misinformation: information, advice or guidance that is not consistent with the current and widely accepted views of the profession when interpreting scientific knowledge to the public.

Novel Diseases: a new disease that has not been previously identified.

Novel Infections: infections are those resulting from changes or evolution of existing organisms, known infections spreading to new geographic areas or populations and previously unrecognized infections.

Standards

1. Registrants must not advertise prevention or cure for novel infections and diseases.
 - a. Registrants may offer therapies to improve overall health and immunity of the patient but must not claim this will prevent novel infections and diseases.
 - b. Registrants may offer supportive therapies for recovery from novel infections and diseases but must not claim a cure.
2. Registrants must not use fear of novel infections and diseases to exploit the patient for their own financial gain.

3. Registrants must not spread misinformation regarding novel infections and diseases or the public health strategies to contain novel infections and diseases (for example, vaccinations).
4. Registrants must follow the advice of the BCCDC with respect to testing for novel infections and diseases.
5. Registrants must continue to follow the [CNPBC Practice Standard: Immunization](#) (the “Immunization Standard”), and in particular must follow the Immunization Standard with respect to immunizations and/or vaccinations for novel infections. In further particular, registrants specifically must not counsel a patient, and/or a patient’s parents or guardians, against obtaining immunizations and/or vaccinations recommended by BCCDC.
6. Registrants must obtain informed consent from patients per the [CNPBC Practice Standard: Informed Consent](#), and in particular must obtain informed consent from patients prior to providing any supportive care relating to novel infections.

Applying the Standards

- Naturopathic doctors (NDs) have an ethical and professional responsibility to provide information, guidance and advice that is factual, evidence-based, and clearly within their scope of practice.
- The spread of misinformation by NDs, including about novel infections and/or immunization, could constitute a danger to the public and is unethical and unprofessional conduct
- NDs do not make claims that unproven therapies will prevent novel infection transmission or adverse outcomes, but do offer supportive therapies, for example:
 - ✗ This treatment can help prevent COVID-19 infection.
 - ✓ This treatment can help improve immune response.

 - ✗ “X” treatment will help prevent COVID-19 infection.
 - ✓ There have been numerous reports on “X” status being associated, with improved Covid 19 outcomes, but this does not replace measures put forward by federal or provincial public health agencies.
- NDs are not restricted from treating symptoms of novel infections and diseases. In providing such treatments, NDs must clarify if the treatments being offered are not scientifically proven to improve health outcomes and on what basis they are making the recommendation, for example:

✗ This treatment will help resolve your COVID-19 post-viral cough.

✓ This treatment is usually effective at relieving/reducing the severity of coughs, and it might help your Covid 19 post viral cough.

✗ This treatment will help resolve your long covid symptoms.

✓ This treatment can be effective at relieving/reducing symptoms of low energy and brain fog. There is no available evidence for it's use in long covid.

- If information, advice and/or guidance about immunizations and related issues are not within an ND's professional role/scope of practice, they should direct patients/clients to another healthcare professional or institution for more information or assessment of their personal situation.

References

- [Health Professions Act](#)
- [CNPBC Bylaws](#)
- [Naturopathic Physicians Regulation](#)
- [CNPBC Practice Standard: Informed Consent](#)

Disclaimer

In the event of any inconsistency between this standard and any legislation that governs the practice of naturopathic doctors, the legislation shall govern.