

## Template Language Guidelines for Naturopathic Providers During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This document is intended to equip naturopathic doctors with language that sets appropriate expectations and understanding of naturopathic care as well as best practices for communicating with your peers, patients, and the public. This document has been developed by the [American Association of Naturopathic Physicians](#) (AANP) in conjunction with the [Institute for Natural Medicine](#) along with input from the [World Naturopathic Federation](#). We ask that you abide by these guidelines for four reasons:

- for the sake of patient care;
- because overzealous claims and unsubstantiated guarantees are a threat to public safety;
- because marketing that speaks to financial gain jeopardizes naturopathic licensing efforts that are underway across the country; and
- because public health officials and regulating authorities are working hard to shut down overzealous claims and guarantees.

### Language Guidelines for Providers when Communicating to the Public

- **DO** reaffirm, support, and share official state and CDC public health guidelines and recommendations for social distancing, personal hygiene, and self-quarantine as needed. **This is imperative.**
- **Do NOT** make public statements in relation to COVID-19 that use the words:
  - Prevent / Prevention
  - Treat / Treatment
  - Cure
  - Provide Immunity to/from COVID-19/coronavirus

**Note:** At the time of this document's publication, there are no known preventive measures, treatment protocols, or cures specifically for COVID-19. Although there may be some correlations with how similar viral infections have been treated, and new information emerging from China and other countries, at this time, claims that you or naturopathic medicine can prevent, treat, or cure COVID-19 are considered false and misleading. Such claims could impede public health efforts, harm the profession by drawing negative attention, and could put your license in jeopardy.

- **Do NOT** monetize the emergency. The financial impact on many industries may be substantial; however, please be mindful of how you word your email updates and marketing communications in light of this pandemic.

- **Appropriate:** “The CDC has recommended that patients secure a three month supply of medications. Our practice has products in stock if you are running low & need refills.”
- **Inappropriate:** “This product will boost your immunity to COVID-19 and is a must-have during this pandemic! Purchase now through our site.”
- **DO** frame your language from the perspective that naturopathic medicine has many tools to support patients. Use the following communication strategies:
  - Emphasize **improvement in general health**
  - Provide **patient-centered care** that supports immune resiliency
  - Discuss **supportive care for symptom management of viral infections**
  - Discuss the importance of **self-care**
  - Offer **suggestions for managing anxiety** and other mental health concerns exacerbated by current events
  - Address **recovery** from illness
- **DO** adapt your care delivery to align with public health mandates and maintain clear lines of communication with patients on how you are available to support them - whether you have modified in-person clinic hours or through telemedicine/telehealth.
- **DO** support your patients by continuing care of patients. Patients who have chronic conditions, pain, and anxiety/depression/insomnia still need attention during this time. Do this by tele-visits when possible.
- **DO** Check the AANP’s [COVID-19 Resource and Guidelines](#), which provide excellent clinical guidelines for naturopathic doctors written by naturopathic doctors.