
Standard of Practice: Communicating about Vaccinations

Standard of Practice

When communicating about vaccinations, naturopathic doctors must do so responsibly, ethically and acknowledging Alberta public health guidelines.

Introduction

Naturopathic doctors are strong proponents of preventive medicine and are morally obliged to be cognizant of public health policy with respect to vaccinations in the province of Alberta. All naturopathic doctors must respect that patients or their parents or guardians have both the responsibility and freedom to decide within the range of options available to them for the prevention of infectious disease.

Administering vaccinations is a restricted activity, as outlined in the *Health Professions Act*. Naturopathic doctors are not authorized to perform this restricted activity in the province of Alberta.

In order to communicate responsibly and ethically about vaccinations, naturopathic doctors must encourage patients to also consult with other health care professionals.

Definitions

Alberta Health Immunization Recommendations: the recommended vaccinations set out from time to time by Alberta Health, including both the routine immunization schedule and recommended vaccinations not included in the routine schedule.

Alberta Health Routine Immunization Schedule: the routine immunization schedule designed by Alberta Health to immunize against diseases at certain stages for children and adults.

Restricted activities: the indicated activities performed as part of providing a health service that require specific competencies and skills to be carried out safely, as defined in the *Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation* and the *Health Professions Act*.

Scope of practice: refers to the knowledge and skills of naturopathic doctors and the comprehensive application of that knowledge and skill to assist patients. The scope of practice for naturopathic doctors is limited to the activities that are authorized through the practice statement in Schedule 14 Profession of Naturopaths, of the Health Professions Act, the Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation, and the standards of practice approved by the Cnda. Naturopathic doctors should only perform authorized activities that they are appropriately competent and educated to perform

Standard of Practice: an authoritative statement that describes a minimum required behaviour of every naturopathic doctor and is used to evaluate individual conduct. Naturopathic doctors should always strive to practice above the minimum standards. Performance below the minimum standard may result in disciplinary action.

Vaccination: the administration of a vaccine to stimulate an individual's immune system to develop adaptive immunity to a pathogen.

Vaccine: a substance used to stimulate the production of antibodies and provide immunity against one or several diseases, prepared from the causative agent of a disease, its products, or a synthetic substitute, treated to act as an antigen without inducing the disease.

Naturopathic doctors demonstrate this standard of practice by:

1. having knowledge of the current Alberta Health routine immunization schedule and the current Alberta Health immunization recommendations;
2. communicating the current Alberta Health routine immunization schedule and current Alberta Health immunization recommendations to patients;
3. accurately communicating risks of infectious diseases;
4. accurately communicating known benefits and risks of specific vaccines at the same time, remaining professional and balanced about both benefits and risks;
5. clearly informing the patient that they are not authorized to give vaccinations or to promote or refute vaccinations;
6. clearly informing the patient that naturopathic treatments are not a substitute for vaccinations;
7. ensuring that any communications about vaccinations are in accordance with the **CNDA Standard of Practice: Advertising and Marketing**;
8. referring to an appropriate regulated health profession or professional to encourage further discussion about vaccinations, in accordance with the **CNDA Standard of Practice: General, CNDA Standard of Practice: Collaboration in Patient Care** and **CNDA Standard of Practice: Transfer and Termination of Care**; and
9. supporting a patient's right to choose treatment with regards to vaccinations in accordance with the **CNDA Code of Ethics**.

Expected Outcomes

Patients are satisfied that:

- naturopathic doctors are knowledgeable about the current Alberta Health routine immunization schedule and the current Alberta Health immunization recommendations; and
- naturopathic doctors communicate appropriately and accurately when communicating to patients about vaccinations.

Related Documents

Health Professions Act

Health Professions Restricted Activity Regulation

Naturopaths Profession Regulation

CNDA Code of Ethics

CNDA Standard of Practice: Advertising and Marketing
CNDA Standard of Practice: General
CNDA Standard of Practice: Collaboration in Patient Care
CNDA Standard of Practice: Transfer and Termination of Care

