

Post-graduate residencies, research, and collaborative opportunities

Development of postgraduate medical education has been given priority status by the profession's academic, accrediting, and membership institutions.¹ Approximately 10% of graduate naturopathic physicians find placement in accredited residency programs, most of which are sponsored by the medical colleges. Certification of naturopathic residency programs is established through the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education. Current challenges to the development of larger numbers of residencies for NDs include standardization of curriculum and identification of appropriate training sites and mentors, as well as issues regarding scope of practice and reimbursement.²

The naturopathic research community is engaged in collaborative investigations with conventional medical schools and patient-care centers, specifically in the areas of chronic disease and environmental medicine. Academic research facilities at the accredited naturopathic medical schools in the United States have assurances of compliance filed with the US Department of Health and Human Services, permitting federally funded human subjects research. These centers currently host studies in epidemiology, bench research, and clinical outcomes funded through both private foundations and federal and state health agencies, including the National Institute for Health (NIH), the National Cancer Institute, and the Office of Dietary Supplements.

ND research faculty submit to the rigorous review, scoring, and recommendation processes familiar to investigators at other medical institutions in the US. Naturopathic faculty also serve as mentors and advisors to graduate and postdoctoral ND students, allopathic medical residents, and post-doctorates pursuing CAM research agendas. Bastyr University and National College of Naturopathic Medicine are currently collaborating on National Institutes for Health (NIH)/National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) sponsored educational grants with the University of Washington School of Medicine and Oregon Health and Science University to develop,

implement, and evaluate curricula for medical students in complementary and alternative medicine.^{3,4}

Additional examples of collaboration with conventional academic universities and patient-care centers include alliances with the department of biochemistry at Emory University to investigate the clinical effects of antioxidant therapy, Arizona State University's Diabetes Collaborative to evaluate naturopathic diabetes care, University of Washington School of Pharmacy to examine the anti-HIV activity of botanical preparations, and Oregon Health Science University to assess naturopathic treatment for remitting forms of multiple sclerosis.⁵

In addition to providing clinical services, naturopathic physician researchers, academicians, and administrators are engaged in the development of governmental healthcare policies. NDs have participated in the establishment of the Office of Alternative Medicine (now the NCCAM), held seats on the NCCAM Advisory Council, and represented their profession on the White House Commission on Complementary and Alternative Medicine Policy (WHCCAMP). NDs presently serve on the Department of Health and Human Services Medicare Coverage Advisory Committee, the American Medical Association CPT Editorial Panel/HCPAC (Healthcare Professionals Advisory Committee), the Center for Medicare Services, the National Cancer Institute, and the Office of Dietary Supplements at the National Institutes of Health.⁶

REFERENCES

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