



FACT SHEET – GOVERNOR DESANTIS VETOES NATUROPATHY LEGALIZATION BILL, KEEPS NATUROPATHY A FELONY IN THE STATE

What CS/SB 688 would have done

- Removed the historic ban on the term "naturopathy" in Florida, allowing naturopaths and traditional naturopaths to identify themselves in the state
- Reinstated licensure for naturopathic doctors (NDs) to practice naturopathic medicine

Legislative path

- Passed the Florida Senate March 5th, by a vote of 33–3
- Passed the Florida House March 11th, by a vote of 85–22
- Vetoed by Florida Governor Ron DeSantis on June 26th 2026
- Senate sponsor: Sen. Ana Maria Rodriguez
- House sponsor: Rep. David Smith

Historical background

- 1927 – Florida becomes one of the first states to license naturopathic doctors in the United States
- 1959 – Florida stops issuing new licenses, while keeping the regulation in the law, effectively banning the profession; practitioners licensed before the sunset are grandfathered in and keep their licenses
- 2010 – Dr. Robert Gelder of Orlando, the last active ND licensee in Florida, passes away
- 1959-ongoing – Naturopathic doctors living in the state who were not grandfathered in, with no access to an ND license, often practice legally under other licenses such as Acupuncture Physician, Chiropractic Physician, and Medical Doctor
- March 2026 – SB 688 passes the Florida Legislature
- June 26, 2026 – Governor DeSantis vetoes the bill

Proponents of the bill claim it would have

- Helped to address the physician shortage in Florida
- Had no state budgetary impact: would not cost the state money to implement

- Given Floridians more freedom of choice in their health care
- Addressed a growing desire amongst Floridians for natural and alternative modalities in medicine
- Deregulated a field which has experienced a near total regulatory ban since 1959
- Allowed naturopaths to describe their education, background, and services without fear from the state
- Allow for interested schools to open naturopathy and accredited naturopathic medical programs in the state

In his veto letter, Governor DeSantis claims:

- Floridians already have access to natural remedies
- Existing licensed practitioners in other healthcare professions can use naturopathic 'methods' – even if naturopaths and naturopathic doctors cannot offer them
- That there are no accredited naturopathic medical schools in the state, which is not likely to happen until naturopathy is no longer a felony in state, and ignores the two recent letters to Governor DeSantis from existing Florida medical institutions expressing keen interest in starting a naturopathic medical program in Florida upon the signing of the bill
- That the bill would increase bureaucracy and could negatively impact existing alternative practitioners
- Does not mention the felony and ban of naturopathy currently in place

National context

- Had the bill become law, Florida would have become the 27th U.S. jurisdiction to license naturopathic doctors and lead the Southeastern United States in promoting the freedom to choose the services naturopaths and naturopathic doctors

Legislative Intent as written in CS/SB 688

- The Legislature finds that the interest of public health requires modernization of regulation related to naturopathy in this state. Since 1927, when Florida first regulated naturopathy, the profession and its role in the health care industry have evolved, including the distinction that exists today between naturopathy and naturopathic medicine, and this chapter reflects that evolution. It is the intent of the Legislature to remove the near total ban on the profession which has been in effect in this state since 1959 and ensure that:

(1) Naturopaths can freely offer naturopathy in this state.

(2) The safe and effective practice of naturopathic medicine can once again take place in this state through licensure of naturopathic doctors who meet minimum standards of education and training and who are held accountable for the safe practice of naturopathic medicine.

What is naturopathy and naturopathic medicine

- Naturopathy is a holistic health philosophy that believes in the healing power of nature and the body's innate capacity for health and wellness.
- Many kinds of practitioners use the philosophy of naturopathy to promote health, wellness, and education including naturopaths, traditional naturopaths, and naturopathic doctors.
- Naturopathic medicine is the application of the philosophy of naturopathy to the practice of medicine.
- Licensed Naturopathic Doctors practice naturopathic medicine by applying the philosophy of naturopathy to medicine, which allows them to use these principles not only for the promotion of health and wellness but also for the diagnosis and treatment of disease.
- Naturopathic Doctors are trained in both natural modalities as well as conventional biomedicine. They are familiar with and utilize herbs, supplementation, nutrition, manual therapy, hydrotherapy, homeopathy, and more, which are the foundation of naturopathy. Their training in the conventional system includes cutting-edge diagnostics, functional lab testing, pharmacology- including herb-drug interactions - regenerative medicine such as stem cell therapy, and more.
- Naturopathic Doctors are leading experts in integrative, holistic medicine, and are at the forefront of bridging the gap between traditional modalities and conventional medicine. This makes Naturopathic Doctors experts in root-cause medicine.
- In recent decades, naturopathic principles formed the foundation of the functional and integrative medicine movement in conventional medicine.
- Naturopathic Doctors utilize the therapeutic order, which is a way to categorize interventions from more gentle and minimally invasive (diet and exercise) to high strength and more invasive (surgery). This framework is used to determine the appropriate treatment based on the unique patient and the type and severity of their condition.

About the FNPA

- The Florida Naturopathic Physicians Association was founded in 1935 as the professional association for naturopathic doctors.
- Driving force behind SB 688
- More information: <https://FNPA.org/news>
- Please direct all media inquiries to Director@FNPA.org.

Industry supporters

- Xymogen, a medical and supplement company headquartered in Orlando, was a key supporter and funder of moving the legislation forward.

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