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**BC Naturopathic Association Applauds Provincial Government's Realization of
Commitment to Improve Patient Care in BC**

April 9, 2009, Vancouver, British Columbia – The British Columbia Naturopathic Association today applauded the announcement by the Ministry of Health that naturopathic physicians (NDs) in BC will be able to prescribe certain pharmaceutical medicines. British Columbia is the first province to more fully recognize the important role that NDs play as primary care givers as a result of the vision and leadership of Premier Gordon Campbell and Health Services Minister George Abbott.

This announcement recognizes the benefits to patients of allowing NDs to practice to a greater extent of their education and training, while streamlining and improving the delivery of health care and enhancing patient choice in BC. The number of patients who use NDs as their primary health care provider has increased threefold in the past decade, as has the number of naturopathic physicians practicing in British Columbia.

“The BC Government has recognized the value of enhancing naturopathic services as a choice in the health care system for primary care to patients,” said Dr. Christoph Kind, ND, president of the BC Naturopathic Association. “This announcement allows for more effective multi-disciplinary treatment of patients and reduces the impact to and costs on the health care system.”

The announcement is a result of an extensive review of the evidence and benefits of science-based naturopathic medicine by the provincial government. In BC NDs are educated and trained to diagnose and treat patients including identifying when certain prescription drugs are needed. By streamlining the process, patients will have more choice in how they receive their health care in BC in a manner that is efficient and effective.

“Expanding the role of naturopathic physicians allows B.C.’s health system to offer more options for patients,” said Minister George Abbott. “British Columbians made it clear during the Conversation on Health that they want increased choice and better access to health services and

today we are meeting our 2008 throne speech commitment to expand the scope of practice for these professions.”

“Our members regularly see patients in their practices whose primary care will be enhanced by a shared scope of practice with other medical professionals,” said Dr. Deborah Phair, Vice President of the BC Naturopathic Association and also a licensed pharmacist. “We are eager to continue our discussions with the BC Government and other health professions to implement these new measures and to work together to provide the best treatment for our patients.”

Naturopathic physicians are a self-regulating profession under the College of Naturopathic Physicians of BC (CNPBC). The College has worked diligently and collaboratively with the provincial government and other health professions to develop a regulatory regime that ensures patient safety for prescribing pharmaceuticals, including continuing competency programs and enforcement of standards, limits and conditions.

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