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Dr. Tara Lapointe, ND (Class of 2011) Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

FEATURES

4

An ND career in public policy

CCNM graduate and board member Daphne Jurgens uses her skills and expertise to develop health policy in the federal government. Her role included supporting the Task Force on Cannabis Legalization.

8

Engaging in public policy - one jurisdiction at a time

Grads share their victories, experiences, and hopes for the future as they push for change:
Dr. Amy Velichka, ND 9
Dr. Tara Lapointe, ND 23
Dr. Alfred Hauk, ND 24
Dr. Shehab El-Hashemy, ND 27
Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND 31
Dr. Laura Stark, ND 12
Dr. Nicole Redvers, ND 15
Dr. Victor Chan, ND 18

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Art direction & design Bhandari & Plater Inc.

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For information about advertising in Mind|Body|Spirit: advancement@ccnm.edu

Publications mail agreement No. 40052173

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Cover photo: Daphne Jurgens is an Ottawa-based CCNM graduate. Photo credit: Kathryn Hollinrake

Editor's Letter 2

Fifteen minutes with Dr. Jonathan Tokiwa, ND 32

The Class of 2005 graduate is working hard to enhance the educational experience for students

Investigating naturopathic care for diabetes 36

How CCNM's research is paving the way for an integrative approach to diabetes care

Mental health advocacy defines practice 38

Class of 2005 graduate Dr. Christina Bjorndal, ND, advocates for a deeper understanding of mental illness

Advertiser's Index 44



Dr. Nicole Redvers, ND (Class of 2010) Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Editor's Letter

“The best public policy is when you listen to the people most likely to be impacted.”

Elizabeth Dole, former transportation secretary in Ronald Reagan's cabinet and former president of the Red Cross



Public policy and your career as an ND

How many naturopathic doctors ever think they will become experts in public policy, lobby governments or work full time for a federal or provincial government?

And yet, a number of CCNM grads are doing just that. Whether developing public policy, lobbying governments to change public policy to protect patients and licensed naturopathic doctors, or continuing to help build the regulatory framework for the profession, NDs across Canada and beyond are developing public policy skills they never imagined having.

In some ways this should come as no surprise to anyone who sees our students and grads in action. Fundamentally, our students are defined by the fact that they care about others and the communities in which they live and identify with. Non NDs who are attracted to public policy are also pulled towards policy work by the fact that they also care about making things better.

This issue brings together some of the most interesting NDs we have heard from, hard at work in the field of public policy.

And no matter what they are trying to improve or change, they are using their considerable listening and advocacy skills to meet their public policy goals.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simone', with a long, sweeping underline.

Simone Philogène
Editor in Chief



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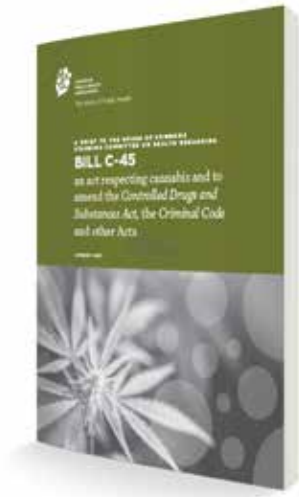
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An ND career in public policy

Class of 2003 graduate
Daphne Jurgens uses her
skills and expertise to
develop health policy in the
federal government



Roughly two years after graduation, Daphne Jurgens was starting a family and facing a choice: Stay in her full-time job with Health Canada or continue building her part-time private practice? After some deliberation, she chose Health Canada.



On October 17, 2018, the *Cannabis Act* officially came into effect in Canada, formally legalizing the recreational use of cannabis for non-medicinal purposes.

“What appeals to me is that I’ve worked in a different way to facilitate change,” says Daphne. “The interesting part about a career in the federal government is the variety of jobs you can have. I’ve learned something new in every area I’ve worked and expanded my skill set.”

Innovative policies in support of public health

On October 17, 2018, the *Cannabis Act* officially came into force in Canada, legalizing the recreational use of cannabis – only the second country in the world to do so. Daphne has been working on cannabis policy since 2015, when she moved to the Office of Medical Cannabis and joined the team that was working on legalization.

Part of her role as a senior advisor included supporting the Task Force on Cannabis Legalization and Regulation as it consulted all levels of government, medical experts, patients, advocates, youth, and others on designing a regulatory framework for non-medical access to cannabis. The task

force also studied jurisdictions outside of Canada (Colorado, Washington State, and Uruguay) that have legalized the use of recreational cannabis.

After the work of the task force was complete, Daphne’s efforts were focused on the development and implementation of the *Act* and regulations, preparing the industry for transition to the new rules, and ensuring that the licensing team was ready to go.

“Being involved in this process has been very exciting,” she says. “This is a complex and fundamental change in drug policy that no other country has done to this scope.”

Policy versus practice

Daphne stumbled into the public policy realm rather serendipitously. Shortly after she completed CCNM’s naturopathic program in 2003, Health Canada was implementing new regulations for natural health products and looking for people with experience in that area. At the time,

“In a practice, it’s you and your patients. Whereas in the public service, your scope of influence might seem small and change may take time, but with a bit of patience you can influence change. It’s not always fast, but it’s there.”

Daphne Jurgens (Class of 2003)

“The interesting part about a career in the federal government is the variety of jobs you can have. I’ve learned something new in every area I’ve worked and expanded my skill set.”

Daphne Jurgens (Class of 2003)

she was waiting for the results of her licensing exams so she accepted a job with the government.

It’s been 13 years since Daphne had a private practice, but she doesn’t see her career with Health Canada as being any different. For her, it’s about personal development and affecting change, no matter how long it might take.

“When you work in government your influence is not as direct as private practice. In a practice, it’s you and your patients. Whereas in the public service, your scope

of influence might seem small and change may take time, but with a bit of patience you can influence change. It’s not always fast, but it’s there.”

Her work is certainly guided by the skills she learned as a student at CCNM, including facilitating change. “That growth has taken me into a career that I never imagined I’d have and allowed me to develop far-reaching health policies in a way that I couldn’t have done in private practice.” *

THE CANNABIS ACT

The *Cannabis Act* controls the production, distribution, sale, and possession of cannabis across Canada.

Subject to provincial or territorial restrictions, as of October 17, 2018, adults who are 18 years of age or older are legally able to:

- possess up to 30 grams of legal cannabis, dried or equivalent in non-dried form in public
- share up to 30 grams of legal cannabis with other adults
- buy dried or fresh cannabis and cannabis oil from a provincially-licensed retailer
- grow, from licensed seed or seedlings, up to four cannabis plants per residence for personal use
- make cannabis products, such as food and drinks, at home as long as organic solvents are not used to create concentrated products

Source: www.justice.gc.ca/eng/cj-jp/cannabis/

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Engaging in public policy – one jurisdiction at a time

No matter what jurisdiction you practise in,
there is always more work to be done to
advance the profession. These grads share
their victories, learning experiences, and
hopes for the future as they push for change.





“Advancing the profession means making the highest level of naturopathic care available in the province so that patients don’t leave to other provinces or states to receive such care.”

Dr. Amy Velichka, ND

**Dr. Amy Velichka, ND
(Class of 2011)**

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan





Dr. Amy Velichka, ND (Class of 2011)

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

In Saskatchewan, the profession is governed by regulation which needs updating. The new *Naturopathic Medicine Act* passed its third reading in 2015 and is currently awaiting proclamation. In the meantime, the Saskatchewan Association of Naturopathic Practitioners (SANP) is moving forward with developing new bylaws and standards of practice which will accompany the legislation.

The process has been rather taxing on SANP's human and financial resources, says Amy. But collaborations between NDs and other health-care professionals has opened up considerably.

“With each year that passes, more NDs settle in the province. People in this province don't hesitate to share the great experiences they've had with their family, friends and neighbours. It's a beautiful thing to practise in a province with smaller communities where word-of-mouth travels fast. This along with ongoing awareness

initiatives during Naturopathic Medicine Week has helped to raise the profile of the profession in Saskatchewan,” she says.

Amy, who held the position of secretary from 2012–2016 and now co-chairs SANP's legislative and regulatory committee, is intimately familiar with the problems facing NDs in Saskatchewan. Because there is ambiguity around the profession's scope of practice, patients are traveling out of province to see NDs whose provincial legislations/governing bodies allow them to deliver advanced care for chronic health issues.

“Advancing the profession means making the highest level of naturopathic care available in the province so that patients don't leave to other provinces or states to receive such care,” Amy says. “We have NDs who are highly skilled and trained (with more moving to the province each year), and now we need the regulation in place to support the safe practice of these leading-edge naturopathic approaches.” *

“People in this province don't hesitate to share the great experiences they've had with their family, friends and neighbours. It's a beautiful thing to practise in a province with smaller communities where word-of-mouth travels fast. This along with ongoing awareness initiatives during Naturopathic Medicine Week has helped to raise the profile of the profession in Saskatchewan.”

Dr. Amy Velichka, ND (Class of 2011)





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“I see advancing our profession as protecting our ability to practise our medicine to our fullest scope and act as integral parts of the health-care system.”

Dr. Laura Stark, ND

Dr. Laura Stark, ND
(Class of 2011)
Regina, Saskatchewan





Dr. Laura Stark, ND (Class of 2011)

Regina, Saskatchewan

Laura is the current president of SANP and has committed to staying in the role to ensure that the road to proclamation runs smoothly. “Having a sound regulatory framework protects our profession. A scope of practice that allows IV therapies, prescribing authority, etc. requires high standards of practice and strict regulation to protect the public. At the same time, regulations need not limit or put undue parameters around our more traditional low-risk modalities,” she says.

“I see advancing our profession as protecting our ability to practise our medicine to our fullest scope and act as integral parts of the health-care system.”

Saskatchewan has quickly become a popular location for NDs to establish roots. As Amy and Laura both point out, word-of-mouth is the number one marketing tool for NDs in the province. It is increasingly

rare to meet someone who has not heard of naturopathic medicine – both on the street and in the government.

“There is more awareness among the other health regulatory bodies in the province and an increased understanding within the Ministry of Health about what we do and the more robust role we can play within the health-care system,” she states. “For example, we’ve had ministry officials shocked to learn we assess standard medical lab results, opening the door to

conversations about updating the *Lab Act* and accessing the eHealth database in order to provide even better patient care.”

Now is the opportune time to get involved with SANP, says Laura. Volunteers are always needed and learning happens quickly. “You don’t have to be a policy expert,” she advises. “Bringing the front line perspective of what it takes to provide quality care to patients is all you need.” *

“There is more awareness among the other health regulatory bodies in the province and an increased understanding within the Ministry of Health about what we do and the more robust role we can play within the health-care system.”

Dr. Laura Stark, ND (Class of 2011)





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“The ND profession needs to start engaging in more health policy initiatives to start steering the conversations nationally. NDs can be effective change makers when given the right tools.”

Dr. Nicole Redvers, ND

Dr. Nicole Redvers, ND
(Class of 2010)

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories





Dr. Nicole Redvers, ND (Class of 2010)

Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Nicole is one of a handful of NDs who practise naturopathic medicine in Canada's northern regions. Since 2011, she has been heavily involved with the Northwest Territories Association of Naturopathic Doctors (NTAND), working tirelessly to bring awareness of the profession at the governmental level.

Their drive has paid off, resulting in substantial changes to the way NDs will be able to practise in the Northwest Territories. Within the next six months, the government is expected to pass new legislation which will formally regulate NDs and grant them the same scope of practice that their counterparts in British Columbia receive. To practise in the Northwest Territories, NDs will need to be licensed with the College of Naturopathic Doctors of Alberta.

“We pushed the political front through fax and email campaigns with patients in addition to lobbying directly with politicians and the department of health,” Nicole says of the NTAND’s efforts. “We

succeeded in ensuring that ND legislation was a priority, given its potential benefits to the population and the shortage of health-care providers in the north.”

Although living and working in Canada’s rural communities may present a few lifestyle challenges – especially if you’re a lifelong urbanite – building a successful practice can be achieved more quickly than in a large city. Nicole outlines the reasons why: The demand for health care doesn’t wane, patient numbers remain steady, and there will always be a need for basic services.

“If you are unsure, reach out to rural NDs across the country to network and learn some of the things they did to get started

in their respective area. Do not be afraid to reach out to colleagues to build confidence in your decision to work as a rural ND. You will do much more primary care, have a good chance to work closely with other health-care providers, and pay your student loans off quicker,” explains Nicole.

And when there are more NDs practising all over Canada, there are more possibilities to advance the profession in the area of public health and policy initiatives.

“The ND profession needs to start engaging in more health policy initiatives to start steering the conversations nationally. NDs can be effective change makers when given the right tools,” she says. *

“If you are unsure, reach out to rural NDs across the country to network and learn some of the things they did to get started in their respective area.

Do not be afraid to reach out to colleagues to build confidence in your decision to work as a rural ND.”

Dr. Nicole Redvers, ND (Class of 2010)





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“I feel very fortunate to practise in this province because of the work that’s already been done.

It’s easier for us at this stage because other provinces are going through things that we went through already one or two decades ago.”

Dr. Victor Chan, ND

Dr. Victor Chan, ND
(Class of 2003)
Surrey, British Columbia





Dr. Victor Chan, ND (Class of 2003)

Surrey, British Columbia

Among all of the provinces in Canada, naturopathic doctors in B.C. enjoy the widest scope of practice afforded to the profession. People like Victor are now building on decades of groundwork laid by NDs.

“I feel very fortunate to practise in this province because of the work that’s already been done. It’s easier for us at this stage because other provinces are going through things that we went through already one or two decades ago,” says Victor, former co-president of the British Columbia Naturopathic Association (BCNA). “But, there are still pieces of our scope that we want to expand.”

During his time at BCNA, Victor took on the government relations portfolio. He ensured the profession was visible and strongly represented by attending many meetings, political events, and fundraisers, and meeting with a litany of governmental officials. It was a learning experience, says Victor, but rewarding to contribute something back to the profession.

“There aren’t enough GPs for every resident of B.C. – even our government acknowledges that. It’s very challenging to find a family doctor,” explains Victor.

“We are an existing resource. NDs are very well-trained and we’re able to be primary care providers should people expect us to take on the role.”

Other jurisdictions are in a unique situation where they can learn from B.C.’s mistakes and earlier challenges. From Victor’s perspective, it benefits everyone when other provinces push for broader scopes of practice, especially when the precedent has already been set. *

“There aren’t enough GPs for every resident of B.C. – even our government acknowledges that. It’s very challenging to find a family doctor. We are an existing resource. NDs are very well-trained and we’re able to be primary care providers should people expect us to take on the role.”

Dr. Victor Chan, ND (Class of 2003)





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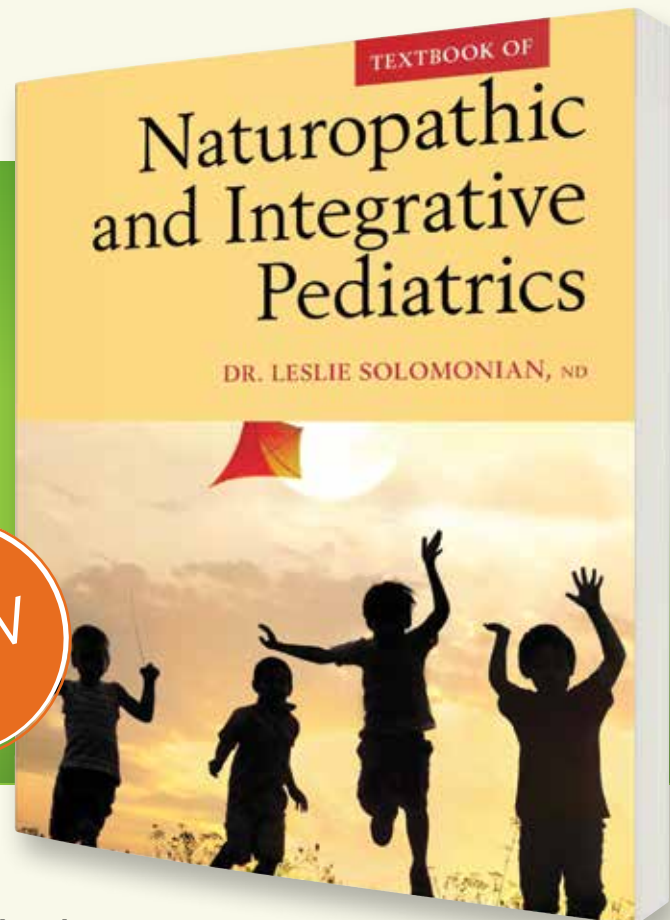
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Dr. Tara Lapointe, ND (Class of 2011)

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

Tara's interest in regulatory affairs started in her fourth-year at CCNM. She was a member of the Naturopathic Students' Association, serving as the VP of clinic. "This was a productive way for me to channel any concerns I had regarding how things were being run and to help with many of the exciting initiatives taking place. I really enjoyed the sense of community, camaraderie, and accomplishment," she recalls.

After graduation she immediately became involved with the Nova Scotia Association of Naturopathic Doctors (NSAND), and eventually moved into the role of secretary. She also leads the Naturopathic Medicine Week committee, working with its members to create a week of events that promote NDs and the profession.

"Naturopathic Medicine Week in Nova Scotia entails several initiatives," Tara explains. "NSAND has fostered a wonderful collaboration with the Halifax Public Libraries, in which they host and advertise talks or workshops led by NDs. Our committee also plans

a larger main event each year, such as a movie screening.

"We also encourage members to host their own talk, workshops, or seminars that we advertise. Recently we've been using a marketing company to put together a campaign to expand our reach outside the urban core."

Spreading awareness of naturopathic medicine is something Tara is passionate about. Naturopathic Medicine Week is a wonderful time to do that, but it's one piece of a larger strategy. Awareness can come from anywhere – national

and provincial associations, naturopathic colleges, research, volunteers, NDs, and patients.

"I dream of a day where I don't have to explain what an ND does or what our education background looks like. Only a fraction of Canadians use naturopathic medicine and we all know how much those who don't could benefit from our knowledge and skill. Even if you aren't involved in an association or regulatory work, every interaction you have with a patient or the public is a wonderful opportunity to spread awareness," she says. *

"I dream of a day where I don't have to explain what an ND does or what our education background looks like. Only a fraction of Canadians use naturopathic medicine and we all know how much those who don't could benefit from our knowledge and skill."

Dr. Tara Lapointe, ND (Class of 2011)





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Dr. Tara Lapointe, ND

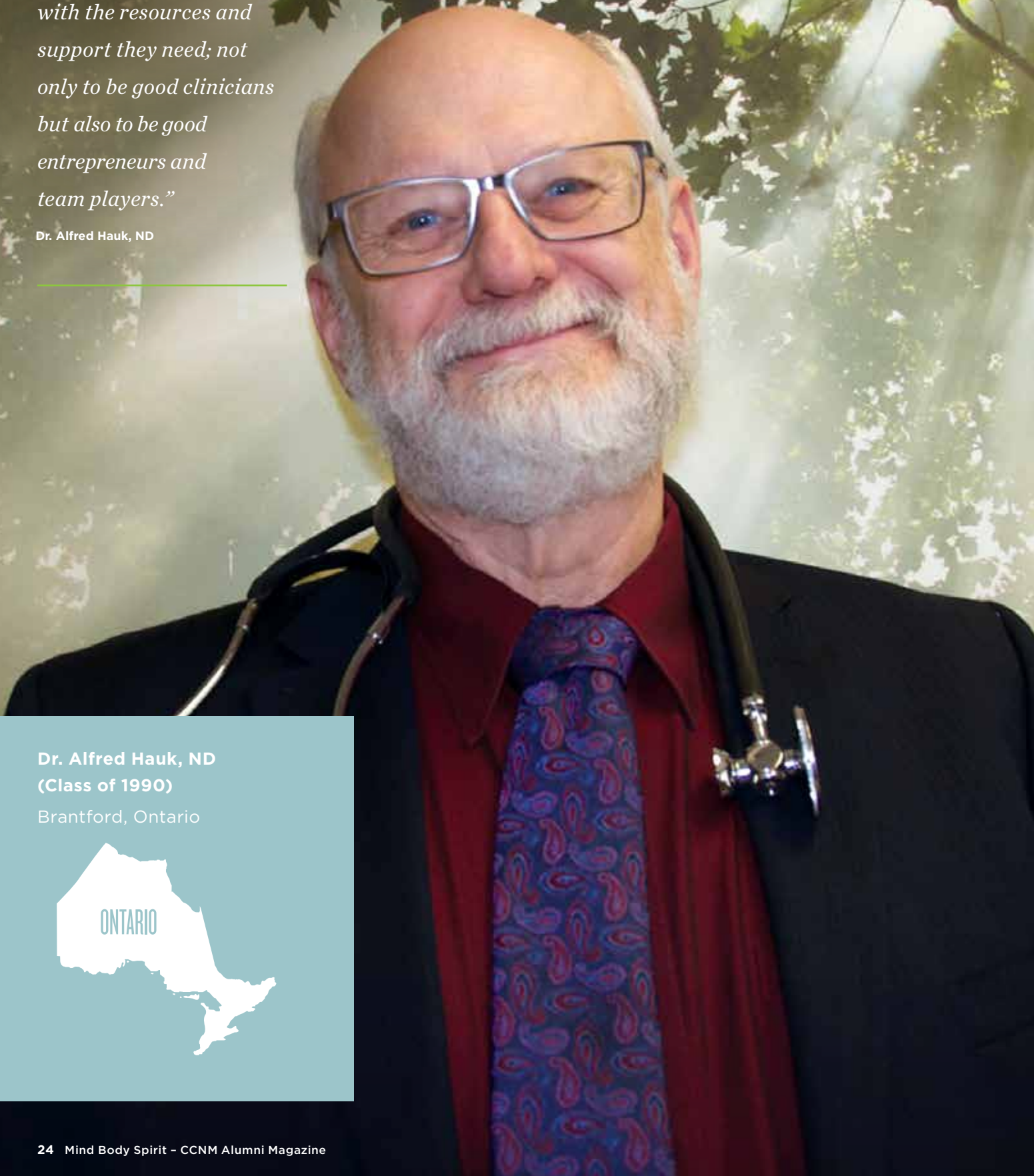
**Dr. Tara Lapointe, ND
(Class of 2011)**

Dartmouth, Nova Scotia



“We have to get ever better at helping our peers and colleagues succeed, with the resources and support they need; not only to be good clinicians but also to be good entrepreneurs and team players.”

Dr. Alfred Hauk, ND



Dr. Alfred Hauk, ND
(Class of 1990)
Brantford, Ontario





Dr. Alfred Hauk, ND (Class of 1990)

Brantford, Ontario

In Ontario, moving the profession under the umbrella of the *Regulated Health Professions Act (RHPA)* has been the subject of discussion between NDs and the government since the early 1990s. When proclamation of the *Naturopathy Act* was finally declared on July 1, 2015, it was met with celebration, relief, and the acknowledgement of the work that countless NDs and professional allies put into moving regulation forward over many years – at the grassroots level and beyond.

Alfred was chair of the Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors (OAND) at the time and had a front-row seat to the spectacle.

“Creating constructive change in the government domain is a slow and arduous process,” Alfred states. “Currently there are many NDs in every province and territory, working hard to create connections with the political powers as they lobby for the benefit of naturopathic medicine. The political reality is that it takes years of behind-the-scenes work in

lobbying and educating, to culminate every now and then, in a quantum leap of change.”

Since proclamation three and a half years ago, the work has continued. Among other things, the OAND organizes an annual lobby day with the provincial government and has the resources to support NDs in their efforts to affect local change. The organization is also pushing for a wider scope of practice and more access to labs with the Ministry of Health and the profession’s regulatory body, the College of Naturopaths of Ontario.

Together, every effort helps to form an all-around, flexible, and robust course of action that advances naturopathic medicine in the province.

“We have to get even better at helping our peers and colleagues succeed, with the resources and support they need; not only to be good clinicians but also to be good entrepreneurs and team players. The onus here is for each and every one of us to do our part, to help ourselves and others,” says Alfred. *

“Currently there are many NDs in every province and territory, working hard to create connections with the political powers as they lobby for the benefit of naturopathic medicine. The political reality is that it takes years of behind-the-scenes work in lobbying and educating, to culminate every now and then, in a quantum leap of change.”

Dr. Alfred Hauk, ND (Class of 1990)

(Pictured with part of the team at Holistic Healing Arts, from L-R: Dr. Angela Hanlon, ND, Dr. Simona Burke, ND, Dr. Onkar Singh, ND, Dr. Mary-Leah Albano, ND, and Alfred)





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“For the first time this year, NDs became eligible for a state incentive program to encourage doctors to practise in rural and underserved areas.”

Dr. Shehab El-Hashemy, ND

**Dr. Shehab El-Hashemy, ND
(Class of 2004)**

Portland, Oregon





Dr. Shehab El-Hashemy, ND (Class of 2004)

Portland, Oregon

Dean of the College of Naturopathic Medicine at the National University of Natural Medicine, Dr. Shehab El-Hashemy, ND, spent most of his career as a naturopathic doctor in Toronto. He's now based in Portland, Oregon, one of the few states that regulate and license NDs in the US. In January 2018, the profession's scope of practice expanded after Senate Bill 856 passed and modernized more than 100 statutes.

What does this entail for NDs? It means they can order diagnostic laboratory studies and imaging, provide minor surgical services, authorize home health and hospice care, work in correctional facilities reviewing medical plans and nutrition programs, participate in Oregon Health Authority drug treatment programs, and much more.

“In my opinion public perception regarding NDs varies greatly depending on their past experience. Some patients were delivered by an ND, some saw the ND as their usual family doctor, others saw NDs as adjunctive or alternative to conventional medicine, and many encountered NDs along the intersection of those spectrums. The sentiments of all those individuals tend to be overwhelmingly positive, which provides required support for those legal bills that expand the scope,” says Shehab.

The challenges faced by NDs in Oregon are mainly the result of the barriers put forth by commercial insurance payors:

credentialing and reimbursement. When NDs aren't credentialed, they can't see patients who have that type of insurance. Required credentials vary by insurer – some demand that NDs complete a residency or provide hospital admitting privileges (which the profession can't do in Oregon). As for reimbursement, NDs are compensated at about 60 per cent of MD/DO rates for the same service codes.

Despite these issues, NDs have many reasons to be optimistic.

“For the first time this year, NDs became eligible for a state incentive program to encourage doctors to practise in rural and underserved areas. Incentives include both scholarships for students and loan repayment for doctors. This opens up new avenues for NDs to more easily start their practices and serve these vulnerable populations.”

Being an educator, Shehab wants to ensure that naturopathic colleges provide increased opportunities for NDs to keep growing their knowledge and skills set, train and integrate with complementary health-care professionals, and establish strong clinical programs for students.

After graduation, the best way to keep the profession strong, whether it's at the national, state/provincial, or local level, is to get involved.

“Join your local state or provincial association! Get involved in your government committee that involves public members,” he says. “In the US, there is a truly inspiring sense of duty when we lobby at the annual DC Federal Legislative Initiative in Washington, DC. This is an annual grassroots lobbying day where NDs and students meet with their representatives in Congress and passionately advocate on behalf of naturopathic physicians.” *

“In the US, there is a truly inspiring sense of duty when we lobby at the annual DC Federal Legislative Initiative (DC-FLI) in Washington, DC. This is an annual grassroots lobbying day where NDs and students meet with their representatives in Congress and passionately advocate on behalf of naturopathic physicians.”

Dr. Shehab El-Hashemy, ND (Class of 2004)

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Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND (Class of 2002)

Toronto, Ontario

Coming from a family of seven siblings, 45 nieces and nephews, and over 100 cousins, Iva prefers to look past the minutia and at the big picture. Is it possible to represent the global naturopathic profession as one single, unified voice? Iva, president of the World Naturopathic Federation (WNF), thinks so.

“I see the global naturopathic profession as a family,” she says. “The goal of the WNF is to be respectful to everyone. It’s the respect and focusing on the common link between us all that works, not the judgement.”

The WNF was founded in 2014 to ensure that naturopathic doctors have a worldwide voice. Promoting what the profession does on an international level requires strong, inspiring leadership. Guaranteeing the organization’s stability and survival in the years ahead is Iva’s main role.

“When you build an organization, you do everything. A lot of what the WNF officers and I have done over the last four years has been creating an organization from the ground floor.”

Representing naturopathic organizations from every world region, the WNF’s objectives include promoting the profession globally, building official relationships with the World Health Organization (WHO), supporting naturopathic regulation in various countries, and increasing educational standards for the profession.

To that end, WNF is currently working on a number of projects:

- Completing a Health Technology Assessment (HTA) for the naturopathic profession. A HTA is the global standard for evaluating the efficacy, cost effectiveness, safety, and practice of a health profession;
- Conducting an international naturopathic practice survey which will outline the demographics of patients, the main conditions that are treated, and the modalities used by naturopathic practitioners from 14 countries, spanning five world regions;
- Publishing a document on the status of naturopathic regulation globally (according to Iva, 11 countries from five world regions are regulated, and most of the regulated countries have similar educational standards as North America);
- Responding to global health issues, as defined by the WHO. The WNF created an anti-microbial working group and is hoping to present its findings at the next World Health Assembly in 2019;
- Analyzing publications written by NDs around the world in order to show the quality, depth, and breadth of naturopathic information;
- Participating in WHO working groups. In December Iva will participate in a working group on anthroposophic medicine in Germany; and
- Assisting national associations in various countries with their regulatory efforts. For example, Naturopaths in Slovenia launched a successful letter-writing campaign in early 2018, based on the advice of the WNF, which helped squash a government proposal that would have made complementary medicine modalities available to medical doctors only.

In addition to all of this, Iva represented the WNF at the Global Conference in Primary Care and Universal Health Coverage in Kazakhstan in October.

Says Iva: “We’re very fortunate to have representation from every world region, which allows us to state with authority that we truly represent the profession, globally.” *

“I see the global naturopathic profession as a family. The goal of the WNF is to be respectful to everyone. It’s the respect and focusing on the common link between us all that works, not the judgement.”

Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND (Class of 2002)

“When you build an organization, you do everything. A lot of what the WNF officers and I have done over the last four years has been creating an organization from the ground floor.”

Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND



Dr. Iva Lloyd, ND
(Class of 2002)
Toronto, Ontario



Fifteen minutes with Dr. Jonathan Tokiwa, BScN, RN, ND, M.Ed.

Since taking over the role of Associate Dean,
Academic Education last December,
the Class of 2005 graduate is working
hard to enhance the educational
experience for students



“I actually found out about CCNM from a segment on Breakfast Television one morning – they featured CCNM and talked about the philosophy of naturopathic medicine. As I further looked into the program and the profession, I thought it aligned with what I wanted to do so I applied to the program and was accepted in the January intake.”

Dr. Jonathan Tokiwa, ND (Class of 2005)

Q How would you describe your first year as Associate Dean, Academic Education at CCNM?

So far, it has been a wonderful opportunity to learn about what we can do to make the academics better. My goal for the first year was to observe and see how things work because there are many things we’re doing that work well. I’m also looking for opportunities to improve, such as finding areas where we could become more efficient, remove redundancies, and automate more processes.

For instance, we’ve streamlined steps to improve efficiency. Recently, we introduced a helpdesk ticketing system where students can email us their questions and from there they get triaged to the appropriate individual. We piloted the project during the summer and now it is fully operational.

Q Tell us a bit about your background.

I always knew I wanted to go into medicine. I picked my career choice out of high school – I was either going into physiotherapy or nursing. I liked that both programs offered immediate clinical experience and contact with patients right away. During my last year of high school, I finalized my choice for nursing and then intended to apply for medicine.

Nursing served as a great foundation for my career because you get valuable clinical experience and interaction with patients. I completed U of T’s four-year Bachelor of Science degree in nursing. During my internship at U of T, I focused in the area of emergency medicine. I did clinical rotations at Sunnybrook Hospital, the Hospital for Sick Children, and Mount Sinai Hospital. During my fourth year, I was hired on as a student nurse at Mount Sinai and then after graduating they offered me a job as a registered nurse.

While working in this position, I applied to medical school and was accepted to McMaster’s medical program. During that

time, my grandmother was hospitalized and I was able to see the patient perspective from her side. Her patient care really saddened me as it was mainly focused on symptom management instead of identifying the underlying causes. This made me think about holistic approaches to care and preventative medicine. I actually found out about CCNM from a segment on Breakfast Television one morning – they featured CCNM and talked about the philosophy of naturopathic medicine. As I further looked into the program and the profession, I thought it aligned with what I wanted to do so I applied to the program and was accepted in the January intake. I decided to try the naturopathic medicine program and knew I had a backup plan if I did not want to pursue it further. Fortunately, I enjoyed the program so much that I stayed.

After graduating from CCNM, I was offered a teaching position as the emergency medicine instructor. Eventually, I was also offered to teach other courses and I became a clinical supervisor. I had also started my private practice, going on now for 13 years.

I applied for the lead supervisor position at the Brampton Naturopathic Teaching Clinic at Brampton Civic Hospital, which I got, and that was a great opportunity to help build a collaborative environment with the medical team at the William Osler Health System. Interestingly enough, one of the MDs on the medical team was a former mentor from when I worked at the hospital. It was wonderful to work with him again.

I also completed my Master of Education specialist degree in adult, community, and higher education at the University of Calgary.

When the associate dean position opened, my educational background, clinical and medical experience, and role as long-time faculty member at CCNM – from being a TA to an instructor to a clinical supervisor – all contributed to helping me feel qualified to apply for this role. I am a clinician but I have been fortunate to have additional opportunities open up!

Q What were your expectations when you took on the role?

I knew that this was going to be a great opportunity to apply what I learned from my master's degree and to bring in an outside perspective.

Q Can you tell us about the exciting projects you're currently working on with the academics team?

There are lots of different opportunities to streamline. The nice thing is that I've been working with other departments and involving the people who are doing the tasks to get their insights into it. I'm working with Student Services to identify areas of redundancy and streamlining them. By bringing in those key stakeholders, we're building better communication. We tend to silo ourselves because we're so busy and when that happens we don't know what the other is doing. But when we open up the communication we can work together to figure out how to improve and support each other. I'm looking at ways to help reduce the burden on faculty in terms of things that are redundant or that we automate.

I've worked with Academics, Student Services, and student leadership to look at our exam process and reduce administrative burden so that the students who are struggling don't fall through the cracks. We're working on getting the grades out sooner so students know their progress and improving students' chances of success so they're not dragging on requirements from the previous term which affects their performance. The key to this is that I've worked with many wonderful colleagues to figure out where those areas can be improved. So it's been a successful team effort.

Q If you could pick one, what would be your career highlight thus far?

Getting stakeholders to communicate and work with each other to talk about the struggles and challenges they're facing so we can work on potential solutions. Many of the things I've been trying to do are foundational because I want to build a team that can work together and can communicate when they are in situations where they need help. When we work as a team, we can find ways to help everyone.*

Get in touch with Jonathan at:
jtokiwa@ccnm.edu

“The nice thing is that I've been working with other departments and involving the people who are doing the tasks to get their insights into it...by bringing in those key stakeholders, we're building better communication.”

Dr. Jonathan Tokiwa, ND (Class of 2005)





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Investigating naturopathic care for diabetes

How CCNM's research
is paving the way for an integrative
approach to diabetes care



CCNM prides itself on being a leader in complementary and naturopathic medicine research. At present the College is conducting over \$11 million worth of research studies that focus on the use of naturopathic treatments with conventional care. One of the areas of focus is diabetes.

According to Diabetes Canada (formerly the Canadian Diabetes Association), 11 million Canadians are living with diabetes, 90 per cent of whom have Type 2 diabetes.

In 2015, CCNM received a \$418,000 grant to study the effectiveness of both naturopathic and conventional therapies in treating Type 2 diabetes. The Brampton-based study is a collaborative project between the College, William Osler Health System and the Wise Elephant Family Health Team. Why Brampton? Diabetes is more prevalent in Brampton than in any other area in the province; the incidence rate is 2.5 times higher than the provincial average of 9.64 cases for every 100 adults.*

Dr. Nicole Henry, ND recently came on board as a co-principal investigator on the study. Prior to studying at CCNM, she was involved in clinical research in the pharmaceutical industry. After graduating from CCNM in 2008, she completed a two-year clinical residency, where she conducted studies examining the teaching methods at the Robert Schad Naturopathic Clinic

and comparing pass rates of the Objective Structured Clinical Exam (OSCE) between the international medical graduate (IMG) cohort and four-year delivery.

“I look at research as another way of knowing and sometimes it can tell us more about how the world works,” she says.

The study is currently recruiting for participants. Upon recruitment, participants are randomized into two groups and monitored over a two-year period:

- Group A receives care from their medical doctor for the first year and are offered integrative naturopathic treatments the second year.
- Group B starts with the integration of medical and naturopathic care and are monitored for a year.

Medical care will include guidelines and recommendations from Diabetes Canada, the medical doctor’s (MD) expertise in diabetes management as well care for the patients’ other health concerns at the MD’s discretion.

Naturopathic treatments will include dietary, exercise and lifestyle recommendations, nutraceutical and botanical supplements, acupuncture as well as care for the patients’ other health concerns at the ND’s discretion.

While there is extensive research in the treatment of Type 2 diabetes, this study is significant as it will be the first randomized controlled trial in Canada to examine the use of naturopathic care in diabetes patients.

Nicole is excited to see what the results will be and what the impact will mean for future studies in integrative medicine.

“This study is the first step down the path to examining the use of integrative care. Does combining these two models of care make a difference in a patient’s health outcomes? If yes, that can be a springboard for more research.” *

Contact Nicole at:
nhenry@ccnm.edu

* Ogilvie, Megan. “New map reveals diabetes hot spots in the GTA.” *Toronto Star*. 24 Apr. 2012. Web. 14 Nov. 2018.

“This study is the first step down the path to examining the use of integrative care. Does combining these two models of care make a difference in a patient’s health outcomes? If yes, that can be a springboard for more research.”

Dr. Nicole Henry, ND (Class of 2008)



Mental health advocacy defines the practice of Dr. Christina Bjorndal, ND

Class of 2005 graduate
Dr. Christina Bjorndal, ND,
advocates for a deeper
understanding of mental illness



Having struggled with anxiety, bipolar disorder type 1, and depression for nearly 30 years, Dr. Christina Bjorndal, ND, knows that erasing the stigma of mental health begins with kindness, care, and empathy. Her journey to self-acceptance and recovery was helped in part by discovering naturopathic medicine in 1996. A few years later, she attended a public forum hosted by the Orthomolecular Medicine Society and became a patient of Dr. Abram Hoffer.

After experiencing her first depression-free year in over a decade, she began to reassess her goals and came to the realization that the status quo no longer fit.

“I made some major life changes, such as resigning from my job as head of marketing in a global investment management firm where I reported to the CEO and travelled frequently,” she remembers. “Upon resigning from my corporate career, I returned to high school at the age of 33 to get the science prerequisites to go to university and then to CCNM.”

Natural Terrain Naturopathic Clinic

At CCNM she met her husband, Dr. Michael Mason-Wood, ND, who was two years ahead of her. After graduation she joined him at his practice, Natural Terrain Naturopathic Clinic, in Whitehorse.

Eventually, they moved to Edmonton and reestablished their clinic in 2012 after being associates in another busy clinic.

“What sets our clinic apart from others is that we are a husband and wife team with very different areas of focus,” she says.

“I consider Dr. Mason-Wood, ND, a mentor and we have regular mentoring meetings where we discuss cases and work together to offer our patients a team-based approach to health.”

Since Christina attended CCNM with one intent – to help others regain their mental health using natural therapies and orthomolecular treatments – her practice is fairly static, although she has expanded to include female hormone balancing (her husband’s practice is more general and eclectic).

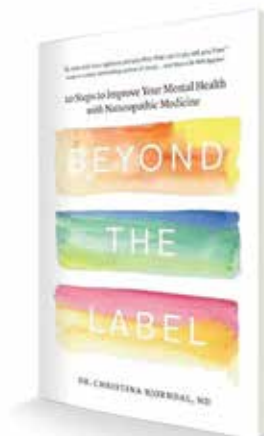
There were times, due to bouts of severe depression, when Christina felt she needed to walk away from naturopathic medicine. But since reopening Natural Terrain six years ago, Christina committed to reinvigorating herself and fully dedicating her energy to succeeding as an ND. The community responded.

“I have a three-month waitlist and a full practice. I developed my practice by shifting my doubts, being vulnerable, and sharing my story publicly of how I became an ND, writing, speaking and connecting with referral partners, as well as providing excellent patient care and service,” she says.

Giving back with love and hope

The two cofounded and sponsor the Natural Terrain Naturopathic Award, a \$2,500 scholarship given to one student in CCNM’s Doctor of Naturopathy degree program who demonstrates an interest

Christina is the author of three books: *The Essential Diet: Eating for Mental Health*, *Beyond the Label: 10 Steps to Improve your Mental Health with Naturopathic Medicine*, and *Moving Beyond: A Journal into Self-Discovery*.





Husband and wife team Dr. Michael Mason-Wood, ND (Class of 2003) and Dr. Christina Bjorndal, ND (Class of 2005)

in mental health and plans to treat patients with mental health issues in their professional practice. They created the award as a way to give back to the College.

“We both grew up with the mentality that you extend a helping hand even if you feel you aren’t able to do so,” she says.

“It is important to us that mental health gets the recognition it deserves. If you ever have the opportunity to extend grace, compassion, love, and consideration to another, then that is what should be done.”

Christina is also the author of three books: *The Essential Diet: Eating for Mental*

Health, Beyond the Label: 10 Steps to Improve your Mental Health with Naturopathic Medicine, and *Moving Beyond: A Journal into Self-Discovery*.

Writing them was a difficult yet cathartic experience for Christina, but through her words, others have found solace and hope.

“The most common statement I hear is ‘I read your biography and your story resonated with me. I admire your vulnerability.’ For me, when I was first diagnosed in 1987, there was no conversation going on about mental health in the media. None. Bell Let’s Talk

and Mental Health Awareness week did not exist. What did exist was stigma and shame,” she says.

“When illness lies in the mental realm people move to judgment, fear and disdain; this is what needs to change. I hope by being an advocate for mental health that I will serve as an agent of change.” *

Dr. Christina Bjorndal, ND, practises at **Natural Terrain Naturopathic Clinic in Edmonton, Alberta.** Learn more about her at: naturalterrain.com drchristinabjorndal.com

“It is important to us that mental health gets the recognition it deserves. If you ever have the opportunity to extend grace, compassion, love, and consideration to another, then that is what should be done.”

Dr. Christina Bjorndal, ND (Class of 2005)





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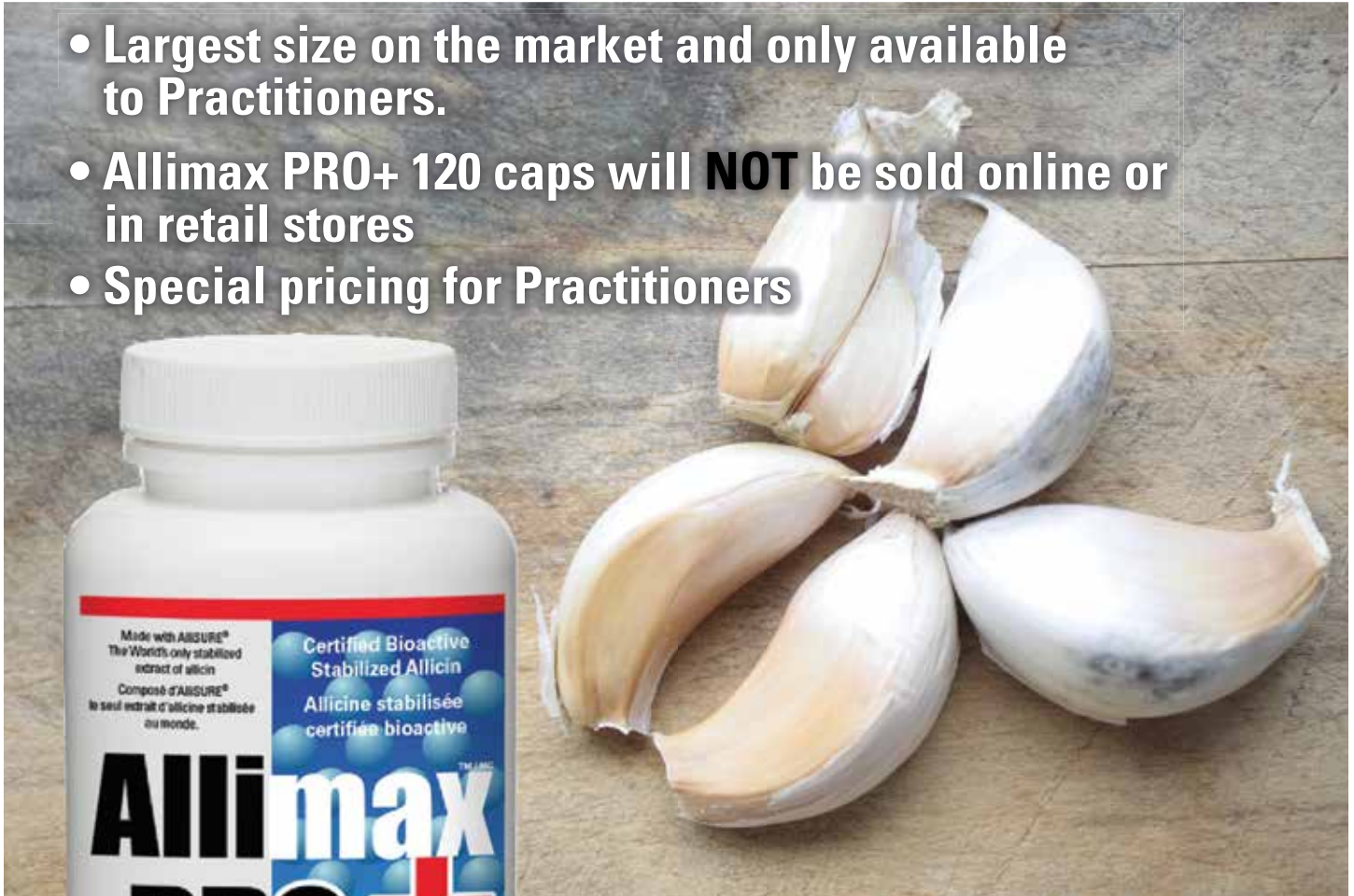
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