



November 21, 2019

TO: Legislative Assembly

FROM: Mary-Beth Baptista, Executive Director

RE: Senate Bill 855

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Senate Bill 855, which became effective June 20, 2019, directs professional licensing boards to study the manner in which persons who are immigrants or refugees become authorized to practice regulated occupations or professions, and to develop and implement methods to reduce barriers to licensure for these persons. The purpose of this memo is to report on progress of the Oregon Board of Naturopathic Medicine in meeting the requirements of the Bill.

## **LICENSURE REQUIREMENTS:**

The Oregon Board of Naturopathic Medicine regulates Naturopathic Physicians in Oregon. The licensure requirements and procedures can be found in law under ORS 685.010 to 685.135. Of particular importance, ORS 685.060 requires graduation from a school of naturopathic medicine accredited by the Council of Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME). There are only nine schools or universities accredited by the Council of Naturopathic Medical Education, seven in the United States; and two in Canada.

Further, per Oregon Statute and Oregon Administrative Rules Chapter 850, Division 30: Licensure; a licensure applicant must provide proof of passage of the Naturopathic Physician Licensing Examination (NPLEX). However, to be eligible to sit for this national exam, an applicant must have completed the appropriate academic requirements at an approved naturopathic medical program (ANMP). An ANMP is a program that has accreditation or pre-accreditation from the Council on Naturopathic Medical Education (CNME) and offers a minimum four-academic-year, in-residence curriculum in biomedical science and clinical didactic studies, as well as clinical (experiential) training leading to an ND degree (United States) or diploma (Canada).

## **AGENCY PROGRESS**

The Agency has initiated work to comply with the requirements of Senate Bill 855 by the operative date of July 1, 2020. The first step is for the Agency to study the manner in which persons who are immigrants or

refugees become licensed Naturopathic Physicians in the State of Oregon. However, the Board does not currently have an option for individuals who apply for and become licensed to identify as immigrants or refugees; therefore, it is not feasible to study the manner in which they become authorized to practice by reviewing historical records. In order to obtain this perspective, the Agency will have to determine whether to add such an option, or determine whether to survey its applicant and licensee base to obtain data on the volume of immigrants and refugees who are in the process or have become licensed, and gather information regarding these individuals' perceived barriers to licensure that they either experienced themselves or perhaps witnessed. Seeing that the Board approximately has only 1100 active licenses, it may be more effective to launch a broad survey of our colleagues in the other twenty-four licensure States, or the North American Board of Naturopathic Examiners, to determine what measures they have researched or implemented to reduce barriers to licensure for the immigrant and refugee population.

Additionally, the Board Executive Director and the Board Chair have regular meetings with the National University of Naturopathic Medicine (NUNM) in Portland, Oregon. We are committed to working with faculty to establish a mechanism for immigrants or refugees who hold a degree in Naturopathic Medicine from their home country to apply some or all of their previous education toward a earning an accredited degree from NUNM.

The Executive Director will continue to work with our policy advisor and the Governor's office to achieve greater equity and inclusion. The Board is currently in the process of developing and implementing a new integrated online licensing system, which creates a timely opportunity for staff to review board process and collaborate with the contracted vendor to identify processes which may create barriers to licensure, for example, language. Agency staff will continue to communicate and work with social service personnel to provide assistance to individuals that wish to become licensed.

With these efforts, the Board expects to gain a comprehensive understanding and strategy to address the barriers faced by immigrants and refugees who are qualified to engage in the practice of Naturopathic Medicine in Oregon.