

## Bastyr ND Grad Takes Helm at AANP at a Critical Time

Carl Hangee-Bauer, ND ('84), LAc, new president of the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP), takes the helm at a critical time. The country is struggling with rising health care costs, skyrocketing rates of chronic disease and a looming shortage of primary care providers. The naturopathic medicine profession — with its focus on disease prevention, healthy lifestyle habits and patient empowerment — is well suited to both combat these problems and take on a greater role in a reformed health care system.

For Dr. Hangee-Bauer, a Bastyr University alumnus, it's a task he's well prepared to tackle. A pioneer in the effort to license naturopathic doctors (NDs) in California, Dr. Hangee-Bauer has run a successful family practice (founder of San Francisco Natural Medicine, the city's largest naturopathic medical clinic) and served as a member of California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine Advisory Council.

Here, Dr. Hangee-Bauer discusses the challenges the profession faces and his goals for his two-year term:

### What are your ambitions as AANP president?

One of the key things to note is that the AANP is a member-based organization. In everything we do, we consider how our work will benefit the profession and, ultimately, the patients.

Having said that, I think there are three central goals:

**Giving more people access to care:** NDs are now licensed in twice as many states as when I started as a student at Bastyr. So the goal is to get more movement in that direction. I think of this "movement" as part licensure (both achieving licensure and expanding scope of practice), part promotion (educating people about naturopathic care and increasing the demand for it), and part working with the powers that be on increasing health insurance coverage of naturopathic services.

**Increasing visibility:** We need to raise the visibility of the naturopathic profession in health care organizations and political spheres. Our efforts are focused on shifting the discussion about health care reform from an insurance-based reform to a more philosophical change to preventive, holistic care.

**Taking a more global view:** One of the AANP's challenges is to think beyond our national borders. The AANP board has worked for the last few years defining and implementing measures to ensure this profession will grow globally.



### You talked of increasing the demand for naturopathic medicine. How might this be achieved?

In 25 years in this profession, I've observed that people often simply don't know what an ND is or how an ND can improve their health care. Many people have just never been exposed to it, so at first they might be leery. But once they are educated on our in-depth, science-based training, and once they understand our philosophy of treating the whole person and looking at causes, not just symptoms, most are supportive. In principle they get it. So it's about exposure and education, and showing them how they can get access to care. To this end, we're currently implementing a national public relations campaign with the help of a professional PR firm.

### How can your work help NDs become more professionally successful?

I believe the best thing we can do to promote the profession is be great doctors. It's important for the AANP to support doctors and educate them about using best business practices. We've posted practice-building tools on the AANP website ([www.naturopathic.org](http://www.naturopathic.org)), and we are facilitating ways for successful NDs to share their experience with others.

Also, our organization is proactive in terms of education and lobbying. We're looking forward, and we're asking, "What are the challenges ahead from a political standpoint?" And we're figuring out ways to measure if we're making progress. We are educating institutions — from vitamin companies and schools to research groups and health care institutions — about the value of ND training, and how much NDs have to offer people in terms of health care. The AANP has a big job, and we're ready and we're doing it.

### How did your education at Bastyr prepare you for your career, both as a private practitioner and as an advocate?

There was something inspiring about my education at Bastyr. Bastyr provided an environment that made my classmates and I feel like we were doing something important — like we were changing the system — and I continue to carry that feeling. Part of Bastyr's mission statement is to "educate future leaders in the natural health arts and sciences," and I think that's something

the school excels at. Bastyr has done a good job of both preparing me as a practitioner and continuing to support me in my career.

### **Do you have any advice for naturopathic doctors who want to get involved in health care reform?**

Three things: **(1)** Join the AANP and your state association. Get involved at a level you're comfortable with. **(2)** Keep your ear to the ground — by that I mean be aware of trends that are going on in your state and nationally. **(3)** Become involved in your community, even if just in your neighborhood, and start discussing these issues with others. And join us at our annual lobby day in Washington, D.C., May 1-3. You'll be amazed at the difference one person can make.

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