

What is the Health Freedom Act and Why Should North Carolina Representatives Support it?

The **Consumer Health Freedom Act** would allow alternative health professionals **the freedom to advertise and practice their occupation openly**, and it would permit consumers the **freedom to choose their treatments and their practitioners**.

Consumers seek out alternative practitioners in increasing numbers and are currently paying for their services out of pocket. Many experts believe broad access to **alternative treatments would substantially reduce health care costs and improve the health of North Carolinians**.

However, under current law, alternative practitioners could be charged with “practicing medicine without a license” because **the North Carolina medical licensing law has a very broad and restrictive definition of what constitutes “the practice of medicine”**, thus criminalizing unlicensed professions.

The North Carolina medical practice act currently restricts to licensed physicians: **“to prevent or diagnose, correct, prescribe for, administer to, or treat in any manner or by any means, methods, or devices any disease, illness, pain, wound, fracture, infirmity, defect, or abnormal physical or mental condition of any individual.”**

It is easy to understand how **this law excludes natural treatments, in favor of surgery and drugs, and prevents consumer access to the treatments of their choice**. Most medical doctors do not offer homeopathy, naturopathy, herbal treatments or nutritional therapies. Under this bill, alternative practitioners would be able to offer a profession level of their services without being automatically in violation of the medical licensing law.

Alternative treatments are currently provided safely without risk of harm to the public. Legalizing them would assure even safer and more professional provision of these services. The bill provides that practitioners would be required to give consumers information about their education, professional training, and certification, and would to refrain from certain acts and services, such as prescribing legend drugs or performing surgery, x-rays, etc.

It is estimated that more than half of all Americans use alternative treatments, many self-prescribed, and often without guidance from professional practitioners. **This bill would ease access to the complete services of trained alternative professionals- services currently not offered by most medical doctors.**

Eight other states already have health freedom laws – Arizona, California, Idaho, Louisiana, Minnesota, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Rhode Island – and at least **twenty-two other states have introduced similar bills**.

**North Carolinians need this Act.
North Carolina needs this Act.
We are counting on your vote.
Thank you for your time.**