

The Complaint Process

The California Board of Naturopathic Medicine (Board) is a state agency with a mandate to license and regulate the practice of naturopathic medicine within the state. The mission of the Board is to protect California health care consumers and expand access to safe and effective primary care by licensing and regulating Naturopathic Doctors through vigorous enforcement of the California Naturopathic Doctors Act.

The Naturopathic Doctor's Act located in the California Business and Professions Code is the body of the law that authorizes the Board to accomplish this.

The following information is provided to help you understand the complaint process:

- Who Can/Should file a complaint with the California Board of Naturopathic Medicine?
- How Do I File a Complaint?
- How are Complaints Processed?
- General Information
- Submit a Complaint Electronically
- Submit a Complaint by Mail

Who Can/Should file a complaint with the California Board of Naturopathic Medicine?

A complaint should be filed by anyone who believes that a licensee of the Board has engaged in illegal activities which are related to his/her professional responsibilities or believes someone is practicing within the scope of a naturopathic doctor (ND) and/or using the ND title without the benefit of a license.

Allegations may include:

- gross negligence or incompetence
- unprofessional conduct
- license application fraud
- misrepresentation
- substance abuse
- mental illness
- unlicensed activity

Complaints received by the Board are reviewed to determine if the Board has the authority to investigate the complaint. The Board can only investigate naturopathic doctors (NDs) who are licensed by the Board, applicants for licensure, or individuals who hold themselves out to the public as NDs. The Board can only investigate complaints that, if found to be valid, are violations of the Naturopathic Doctors Act or the regulations that have been adopted by the Board.

Complaints involving allegations which are not within the jurisdiction of this Board will be referred to other agencies which may be better able to assist the complainant. If the Board does not know of another agency that can investigate the complaint, a letter is sent to the person who filed the complaint advising that no investigation will be conducted.

Allegations which are not within the authority of the Board:

- fee/billing disputes
- general business practices
- personality conflicts
- providers licensed by other boards/bureaus such as physicians, chiropractors, dentists, hospitals, vocational nurses, psychiatric technicians, nurses and nursing assistants, physician assistants, respiratory therapists, and pharmacists

Complaints related to facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes should be brought to the attention of the [California Department of Public Health](#).

How Do I File a Complaint?

Complaints may be filed online through [DCA BreEZe Online Services](#).

In filing your complaint, the information you provide will determine the action the Board will take. The most effective complaints are those that contain firsthand, verifiable information. Therefore, please provide a statement, in your own words, which describes the nature of your complaint. Please include as many specific details as possible, including dates and times, as well as any documentary evidence related to your complaint. The emphasis should be on providing necessary factual information. While anonymous complaints will be reviewed, they may be impossible to pursue unless they document evidence of the allegations made.

If you are unable to file your complaint online, contact our board at this link https://www.naturopathic.ca.gov/about_us/contact_us.shtml or by mail at the address below:

California Board of Naturopathic Medicine
Attn: Complaint Intake
1747 N. Market Blvd., Suite 240
Sacramento, CA 95834
Fax: (916) 928-4787

How are Complaints Processed?

Within 10 days after receipt of the complaint, the Board sends a written notification of receipt to the complainant. Complaints containing allegations of the greatest consequences (e.g. gross negligence/incompetence, patient abuse, etc.) are given priority attention. The complaint is then investigated by the Department of Consumer Affairs Division of Investigation. If no violation can be substantiated, the case is closed, and the complainant is notified. Investigations which provide evidence that the naturopathic doctor has violated the Naturopathic Doctors Act, and that the violation warrants formal disciplinary action will be resolved by informal or formal proceedings. If a case involves unlicensed or criminal activity, it is referred to the local district attorney for prosecution.

To ensure that the success of the investigation is not jeopardized in any way, the details of the investigation remain confidential and are not public record. If, however, disciplinary or criminal action is taken, some information may become a matter of public record. In addition, if disciplinary action or criminal action is taken, you may be called to testify as a possible witness.

General Information

The entire complaint review, investigation and legal review process may take an extended period of time depending on the complexity of the case. During the investigation stage, all information is confidential and may not be discussed. When a case is finally resolved, you will be notified of the action taken by the Board except in the case of anonymous complaints. Please keep in mind that any action taken by the Board has no impact on civil remedies which may be available to you. If you have questions about filing a complaint, please call (916) 928-4785.

