

Press Release

Dr. Deidre Macdonald, ND

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Naturopathic physician licensed to prescribe pharmaceutical medicines:

Courtenay naturopathic physician, Dr. Deidre Macdonald, is one of the first group of naturopathic physicians in Canada to be granted the authority to prescribe pharmaceutical medicines. After a rigorous pharmaceutical upgrading course, and the successful completion of oral and written examinations, she is looking forward to serving her patients with another tool in her medicine bag.

On April 9th, 2009 the BC government granted a new and expanded scope of practice for Naturopathic Physicians in British Columbia. The new scope of practice includes pharmaceutical prescribing authority and access to publicly funded laboratories. The prescription medicines available to naturopathic physicians include most prescription medications that general practitioner medical doctors have access to. Among the medicines not included are pain medications, steroids and chemotherapy drugs.

The primary purpose of this change is to ensure that naturopathic physicians can continue to utilize the increasing number of natural medicines that are becoming “scheduled”, meaning available only by prescription. In addition, with access to most pharmaceutical medicines, naturopathic physicians will be better able to serve the needs of their patients. Whether it is to prescribe an antibiotic for a serious infection, to provide an antidepressant to a patient in need, or use pharmaceuticals to decrease blood pressure, pharmaceutical medicines are deemed to have a place in any primary care medical setting, including the naturopathic physician’s office.

Dr. Deidre Macdonald says, “I have always believed that most health issues are best addressed by the tenet of lifestyle first, natural medicines second and pharmaceutical medicines third. I still aim to find the underlying cause of health problems and take the time to work with patients to make the real changes necessary to find lasting solutions to their health problems. I discuss with my patients the full range of options for treating their conditions, including dietary change, exercise, stress management, herbal medicine, physical therapy, homeopathy and pharmaceutical options. Pharmaceutical medications are one tool in the quest for health. We discuss the pros and cons of each approach and the patient decides what they feel most comfortable with. The training I have received in pharmacology helps me to educate patients about those medicines that have real benefits that outweigh the risks, and those that do not. My aim is for my patients to have the best plan for their individual health goals and at times that will include pharmaceutical medicines.”

Naturopathic medical services are covered by most extended health insurance plans. ND’s offer lengthy and thorough consultations, physical examinations, lab work, pap smears and breast exams. Their medical training includes a university undergraduate degree with pre med

sciences, graduation from an accredited 4-year naturopathic medical school, and mandatory continuing education.

For more information about this new legislation contact www.bcna.ca or Dr. Macdonald's office at 250 897-0235 or www.getwellhere.com.