



IOWA HEALTH FREEDOM COALITION

“The Iowa Access to Wellness Act” (IAWA)

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1) Why is the Iowa Access to Wellness Act needed?

Public demand for natural, holistic healthcare is increasing but access to providers and methods is restricted. Iowa’s Medical Practice Act and other health professions practice acts are written so broadly that unlicensed providers of the healing arts can be charged criminally for practicing medicine, massage therapy, etc. without a license even in the absence of harm to any individual. This has effectively suppressed the provision of natural, holistic wellness care in Iowa.

2) What are the anticipated benefits if this bill is passed?

Freedom to Practice: Providers of natural, holistic healing arts services willing to comply with the mandated prohibitions and disclosures of the IAWA will be free to diagnose and treat according to their expertise and training without fear of being prosecuted for practicing medicine without a license.

Freedom to Access: With the legal onus removed from these unlicensed providers, a wider range of natural, holistic healthcare services will be available in Iowa, which will increase the healthcare options for consumers.

Wellness Maintenance and Disease Prevention: Prevention of disease should be a major goal of any healthcare system. Individuals seek natural, holistic healthcare services to prevent disease and maintain their health. Having greater access to these services means a healthier and happier society.

Economic Benefits: Iowans will have increased access to lower cost services for prevention and treatment of disease, reduced healthcare expenditures, greater productivity and fewer days absent from work.

3) How will this bill affect currently licensed healthcare professions?

The IAWA will not affect the scope of practice of any of the currently licensed healthcare professions. Passage of the IAWA will assure that Iowans have access to the entire range of healing arts services, not just those few that have been licensed.

4) Isn’t licensure important in all areas of healthcare?

It is neither necessary nor practical to require licensure for every type of healthcare. The purpose of licensure is to protect the public from harm. Iowa licenses medical doctors because the modalities they use (drugs, surgery and radiation) require extensive technical training to assure proper and safe use. The licensing process assures that medical doctors have received adequate education and training and have sufficient knowledge to reasonably assure the public’s safety. Provision of modalities that pose minimal risk does not require licensure.

Licensure of the entire field of natural, holistic healthcare is impractical because there are so many modalities. Setting up licensing boards for each would be prohibitively expensive and would create an enormous and unnecessary bureaucracy.

Each type of healthcare has its own way of training providers. Some types are learned through formal courses; others through apprenticeship. Some spiritual practices are acquired naturally, as Divine gifts. Arbitrary standards of training, e.g., the number of hours of training required, have no practical significance among the natural, holistic healing arts.

5) How will the public be protected from unethical, fraudulent or dangerous practices or practitioners?

Existing Iowa laws already regulate unethical, fraudulent and dangerous practices. Citizens have recourse to civil suits and county attorneys can bring charges where criminal acts may have been committed. Furthermore, the IAWA requires that practitioners disclose in writing if they have been convicted or adjudicated of a violent crime or a sexual offense.

6) Will this bill create additional expenses for the state, clients or practitioners?

No, the IAWA will not create additional expenses for anyone. In fact, the bill is designed to save the state the expense of creating numerous boards for a plethora of natural, holistic modalities, while the public will have greater access to low-cost wellness care providers, who themselves will be spared necessary training and license fees, again resulting in savings to the public.

7) Do Spiritual healers need the protection of this legislation?

Yes, under current Iowa law, if a spiritual healer diagnoses, treats, operates or prescribes, even in terms of energy medicine, for any human disease, pain, injury, deformity, or physical or mental condition, then they are vulnerable to prosecution for practicing medicine without a license, even if no harm occurs and even if the client is satisfied with their treatment.

8) Will unlicensed healthcare providers be able to diagnose and treat disease?

Yes, unlicensed providers of the natural, holistic healing arts will be able to diagnose and treat within the context of the types of wellness care they provide. Individuals will choose care from the wide variety of providers and services available and will take responsibility for their own health and wellbeing. The individual will be free to exercise the freedom to seek the advice of any healthcare providers, licensed and unlicensed.

9) How will an individual know if an unlicensed provider is competent?

Consumers are free to review the training and credentials of any healthcare provider, and to seek the opinion of others who have used any provider. Ultimately, the criterion for judging a provider or services is whether they are serving one's good health. Also, we are free to seek a "second opinion" at any time.

10) Many natural, holistic healthcare modalities have not been studied scientifically. Is that a problem?

Many types of natural, holistic healthcare are being studied scientifically today. Many have stood the test of time. Some are very difficult to study by the scientific method, but this does not mean that they are not efficacious in some contexts. Individuals have always decided which modalities and which providers seem appropriate for their own wellness and wellbeing. We should recognize too that clinical research is not the pure, rational process that we learned it was in grade school. Rather it has become very much a profit-oriented activity of the medical industry. Research dollars are not focused on finding the least invasive and most cost-effective healthcare solutions. Consequently, many natural, holistic approaches have not been fully researched. Nevertheless, individuals have gained great benefit both in terms of maintaining wellness and in treating diseases, especially diseases that modern medicine seems unable to adequately address.

The Iowa Access to Wellness Act will assure that Iowans will have the full range of healing arts options available to them, including the prevention-oriented, safe, natural, holistic healing arts.