

First Graduates of Naturopathic Degree Program at National

In historic commencement ceremonies on Dec. 17, [National University of Health Sciences](#) awarded three graduates the institution's first doctor of naturopathic medicine degree (ND) since 1952. The landmark commencement day honored Steven Moore, DC (valedictorian); Carlos Quezada, DC (salutatorian); and Lisa Leonard as recipients of the doctor of naturopathic medicine degree.

National's current ND program opened its doors for the first class of students in the fall of 2006. The addition of a naturopathic program was a major part of the [university's commitment to integrative medicine](#): providing a collegial environment for students and physicians from differing medical specialties to work together for the advancement of patient care.

NUHS is the only naturopathic medical school in the Midwest and one of only two universities in the country to offer degrees in naturopathic medicine, chiropractic medicine, and acupuncture and Oriental medicine on the same campus. Although only three years old, the ND degree program at NUHS is thriving and continuing to expand with the addition of new faculty and growing admission rolls.

What many do not know is that the 106-year-old institution, primarily acknowledged for its excellent chiropractic degree program, previously offered the naturopathic degree from the 1920s through 1952. In fact, National holds a small place in the early history of the naturopathic profession. The institution abandoned the ND degree in 1952 due to criticism of the profession by the U.S. Office of Education. The decision was made during a tumultuous time when the chiropractic profession was also seeking governmental recognition and accreditation.

The naturopathic profession struggled for several decades and nearly died out, but many stalwart naturopathic physicians persisted through hard times to bring the profession into a new renaissance. The number of states now licensing naturopathic physicians has grown to fifteen, with strong advocacy efforts continuing across the nation to increase that number. With growing consumer demand for natural and conservative health care, in addition to mounting evidence from research supporting the efficacy of natural treatment modalities, demand for well-trained naturopathic physicians will continue to grow.

Ironically, the NUHS naturopathic medicine program is offered in the state of Illinois, which does not currently recognize naturopathic physicians and has no state licensure law. However, the university and many of its naturopathic program faculty members are part of statewide efforts to bring licensure legislation before the Springfield legislature.

"It is with a sense of pride and accomplishment that we celebrate our return to the program diversity of National's past," said NUHS President Dr. James Winterstein. "We have planned for this time since 1993. Today culminated the long road to this kind of diversity that is intended to encourage collegiality among the various degrees in the field of natural medicine rather than the competitiveness that so often prevails. My thanks to our Board of Trustees for its wisdom in allowing us to pursue this opportunity and my congratulations to our first graduates!"

Said Dr. Steven Moore, class valedictorian: "It is truly an honor for so many reasons. Being the first through the National ND program marks the beginning of a long tradition of naturopathic medicine in Illinois, and serves as a great moment toward receiving official recognition in the state. I am proud to be part of the movement."

The naturopathic medicine program at NUHS requires a bachelor's degree for admission. Since the university has a rolling admissions schedule, students can begin their program in September, January or May. National also offers advanced standing in the naturopathic medicine program on a case-by-case basis to degreed professionals from other health care specialties. For more information on the naturopathic medicine degree program at NUHS, call 1-800-826-6285.

Source: National University of Health Sciences