

Date of Hearing: August 5, 2026

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Buffy Wicks, Chair

SB 1303 (Wahab) – As Amended April 28, 2026

Policy Committee: Business and Professions

Vote: 17 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill extends, until January 1, 2031, the sunset date for the California Board of Naturopathic Medicine (Board) and makes additional policy and technical changes in response to issues raised during the Board's sunset review oversight process.

More specifically, this bill:

- 1) Extends the Board's sunset date until January 1, 2031.
- 2) Staggers the terms of Board members appointed by the Governor after the bill's effective date and specifies appointments last four years.
- 3) Repeals obsolete language related to applications received prior to December 31, 2007.
- 4) Authorizes the Board to accept the voluntary cancellation of a Naturopathic Doctor (ND) license upon the written request of the licensee, provided the cancellation is not in lieu of an administrative enforcement action.
- 5) Establishes a process for an ND to obtain a fictitious-name permit to allow the ND to practice under a name other than their own, also known as a "DBA" (doing business as).
- 6) Provides that any of the following constitutes unprofessional conduct: the use of any fictitious, false, or assumed name, or any name other than their own by a licensee either alone, in conjunction with a partnership or group, or as the name of a professional corporation, in any public communication, advertisement, sign, or announcement of their practice without a fictitious-name permit.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Costs of approximately \$761,000 per year to continue operation of the Board (Naturopathic Doctors Fund).

The Board anticipates minor and absorbable costs for an increase in workload to create and implement retired status, as well as increases in revenue, as follows:

- 96 additional applications and \$7,200 in revenue in fiscal year (FY) 2026–27.
- 222 applications and \$16,650 in revenue in FY 2027–28.
- 403 applications and \$30,225 annually thereafter (Naturopathic Doctors Fund).

The Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) anticipates absorbable costs for system updates to support the new fictitious name permit program.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Purpose.** This bill is the sunset review vehicle for the California Board of Naturopathic Medicine, authored by the chair of the Senate Committee on Business, Professions, and Economic Development. The bill extends the sunset date for the Board and enacts technical changes and statutory improvements in response to issues raised during the Board's sunset review oversight process.
- 2) **Background. *California Board of Naturopathic Medicine.*** The Board is responsible for licensing and regulating NDs under the Naturopathic Doctors Act. The foundational principle of naturopathy is a belief that the human body is capable of healing itself with the assistance of natural therapies and treatments. Naturopathic medicine is a system of primary health care that integrates the values and practices of traditional naturopathy with modern methods and modalities for diagnosing, treating, and preventing health conditions, injuries, and disease. NDs provide care in a variety of settings, including solo practices, integrative clinics, and academic institutions. As of June 30, 2025, there were 1,057 active ND licensees in California.

Sunset Review. Each year, the Assembly Committee on Business and Professions and the Senate Committee on Business, Professions, and Economic Development hold joint sunset review oversight hearings to review the licensing entities under DCA. The DCA boards, bureaus, and other entities are responsible for protecting consumers and the public and regulating the professionals they license. The sunset review process provides an opportunity for the Legislature, DCA, licensing entities, and stakeholders to discuss the entities' performance and make recommendations for improvements.

Each licensing entity subject to review has an enacting statute with a repeal date, meaning their authority must be extended by the Legislature before the repeal date; otherwise, the entity loses its statutory mandate. This bill is a "sunset" bill, intended to extend the repeal date of the BRN, as well as incorporate the recommendations from the sunset review oversight hearings.

Issues Raised during Sunset Review. The background paper for the Board's sunset review oversight hearing contained a total of 16 issues and recommendations, each of which is eligible to result in statutory changes enacted through Board's sunset bill. Some of the issues raised in the sunset review are addressed in this bill. Two issues raised during sunset review are not addressed in this bill: expanding the types of services an ND may provide, and title protection. The Board reports that complaints about unlicensed activity account for 71% of the complaints it receives.