

# THE WEEK

Like 119k

Follow



WORLD

U.S.

POLITICS

BUSINESS

TECH

SCIENCE

ENTERTAINMENT

LIFESTYLE

SPEED READS

CARTOONS

PUZZLES

STORE

more ways to *play*, starting at \$6.99

shop now &gt;

Expect more. Pay less.



## This is a perfect example of why Democrats aren't the party of science

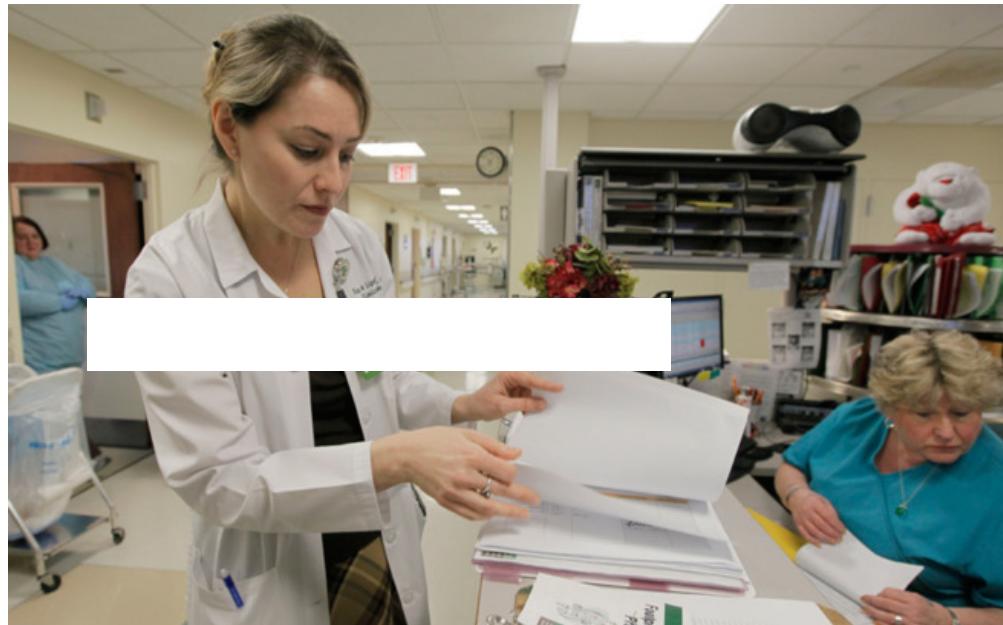
Why do "naturopathic doctors" get feted and nurses get restricted?

By Josiah Neeley | 6:12am ET

3

8

5



Behold: A solution. (AP Photo/M. Spencer Green)

This probably passed you by, but last October 7-13 was "Naturopathic Medicine Week," a distinction bestowed unanimously by the U.S. Senate recognizing "the value of naturopathic medicine in providing safe, effective, and affordable health care." And if you missed it, fear not! Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) has introduced another resolution to celebrate it this October, too. This is a baffling move for the so-called party of science.

For the uninitiated:

Naturopathy, or naturopathic medicine, is a system of medicine based on the healing power of nature. Naturopathy is a holistic system, meaning that naturopathic doctors (N.D.s) or naturopathic medical doctors (N.M.D.s) strive to find the cause of disease by understanding the body, mind, and spirit of the person. [[University of Maryland Medical Center](#)]

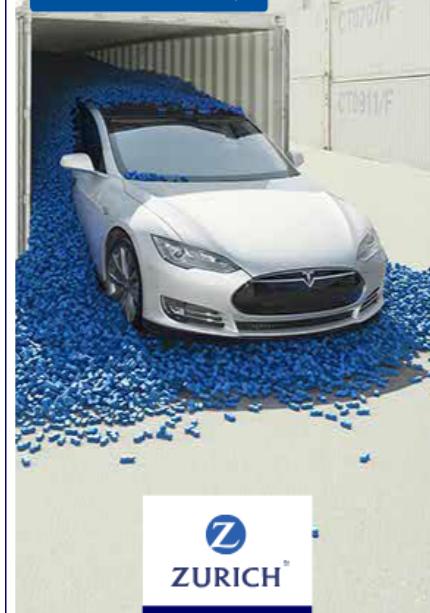
If that doesn't sound very scientific, naturopaths agree. In one revealing interview, naturopathic oncologist Daniel Rubin states that "one of the greatest challenges we face [as naturopaths] is the widespread public belief in the scientific method."

GET 4 FREE ISSUES  
OF THE WEEK

[CLICK HERE](#)

**ZURICH INSURANCE.**  
**FOR THOSE WHO  
TRULY LOVE THEIR  
BUSINESS.**

[FIND OUT MORE >](#)



MOST POPULAR ON THE WEEK

1. China thinks it can defeat America in battle
2. 7 language habits that reveal your age
3. Don't be fooled: America is still headed for an aristocratic dystopia
4. How liberalism became an intolerant dogma
5. Death to Pandora? A guide to the looming music copyright war
6. 6 things the most productive people do every day
7. 10 things you need to know today: July 11, 2014
8. Sorry *Esquire*, lustng after 40-year-old women isn't progress
9. New urbanism isn't just for liberals — conservatives should embrace it too

But while naturopaths eschew the scientific method, they very much want to mimic the trappings of the medical mainstream. To that end they have created their own [accredited degree granting schools](#), their own professional associations, and have sought licensing from the state as a sign of legitimacy. And while naturopathy has been linked to various negative health outcomes, [including death](#), many states have gone along. Seventeen states license "naturopathic doctors" and some states allow NDs to prescribe drugs or even perform minor surgery.

There are a lot of lessons one could draw from this, ranging from the Democrats' claimed status as the "party of science" to the wisdom of letting legislators decide what is and isn't "safe, effective, and affordable health care." But instead, I'd like to focus on how the treatment of naturopathic doctors compares to another more respectable group of medical professionals: nurses.

Via occupational licensing, states restrict the scope of practice that nurses can engage in both with and without the supervision of a physician. In some states, these restrictions are severe. [Texas](#), for example, requires Advanced Practice Nurses to be supervised by a physician. And even with physicians' supervision, nurses are not allowed to perform many medical services at all. As a result, medical care is [more expensive](#).

While proponents of these restrictions argue that they are necessary to protect public health and safety, the evidence does not bear this out. Studies have repeatedly shown that for a substantial proportion of medical services (ranging from 25 percent for some specialties to 90 percent for primary care) nurses perform [as well if not better than licensing physicians](#).

But as the naturopathy example shows, public health is really not the concern here. If it were, then giving greater scope of practice to naturopaths (who don't provide effective medical care) than to nurses (who do) would make no sense. As with most examples of occupational licensing, the real goal is to increase salaries for those within the guild by restricting competition.

And it's working. The United States has some of the most expensive doctors in the world. These restrictions have also unsurprisingly led to physician shortages, and calls for price controls and other regulations. But it doesn't have to be that way. Our hospitals are full of the answer to the physician shortage. We just need to give people the same freedom to choose a good nurse that they already have to choose a bad doctor.

3 8

10. Maybe the world should just let Iraq split apart

#### CARTOONS



**offerpop**  
Showcase consumer social content to convert your shoppers  
Introducing the new Offerpop Commerce  
[LEARN MORE](#)

#### Sign up for our free email newsletters

your email address here

SIGN UP

AND FOLLOW US ON



**Josiah Neeley**

[Follow @jneely78](#)

Josiah Neeley is a Policy Analyst for the Armstrong Center for Energy and the Environment at the Texas Public Policy Foundation.

#### MORE FROM AROUND THE WEB



What is everyday life like for a bodybuilder?

Slate



How Wealthy People Use Credit Cards To Their Advantage

Sponsored



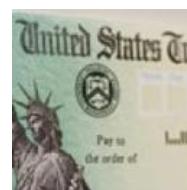
America's favorite beers by state

Slate



Think twice about paying off your mortgage

Sponsored



Homeowners Are In For A Big Surprise...

Sponsored



Why Boxed Hair Color Is Out Of Fashion

Sponsored



Little Known Method to Pay Off Mortgage Faster

Sponsored



Why do we drink rum and Coke instead of Pepsi?

Slate



15 Worst Beauty Trends Over Time

Sponsored



The coolest thing anyone has ever worn

Slate



Obamacare Now Largest Tax Increase in American History

Sponsored



The biggest spaceships in science fiction, charted

Slate



Why are blue jeans blue?

Slate



I tricked my boyfriend into getting me pregnant

Slate



They said I was stupid! a Self-Made Millionaire Shares His Secrets

Sponsored

Sponsored Content by nRelate

## EDITORS' PICKS



7 language habits that reveal your age



How liberalism became intolerant



The boy who lived



Chasing 40-year-olds isn't progress



There was never a cupcake bubble



The border crisis killed immigration reform

## THE WEEK'S AUDIOPHILE PODCASTS: LISTEN SMARTER



The Week

This week I learned plants can 'hear' themselves ...

SOUNDCLOUD

7:43

497

This week I learned plants can 'hear' themselves being eaten, and more 497

It's time to kill the word 'troll' 717

Why Seinfeld is still master of its domain 1,474

Your weekly streaming recommendation: The Station Agent 1,228

This week I learned the best way to cure your gnarly garlic breath, and more 1,592

Would you quit your job for \$25,000? 1,542

5 words that are badly broken 2,684

**W** Latest tracks by [The Week](#)

[Cookie policy](#)

## SUBSCRIBE TO THE WEEK

PRINT + DIGITAL



Get both print + digital

PRINT



Get home delivery

DIGITAL



iPad, Android, or Kindle Fire

[SUBSCRIBE](#) / [SUBSCRIBER LOGIN](#) / [CURRENT ISSUE](#) / [GIVE A GIFT](#) / [BACK ISSUES](#) / [CLASSROOM SUBSCRIPTIONS](#) / [RSS](#)  
[AD INFO](#) / [PRIVACY POLICY](#) / [TERMS & CONDITIONS](#) / [THE WEEK UK](#) / [SITE MAP](#) / [CUSTOMER SERVICE](#) / [CONTACT US](#)

© 2014 THE WEEK Publications, Inc. All rights reserved. THE WEEK® is a registered trademark owned by Felix Dennis. THEWEEK.COM is a trademark owned by Felix Dennis.