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Informed Consent for Naturopathic Medical Services

A naturopathic doctor is a practitioner trained in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of human health conditions, injury, and disease by the use of natural means. While NDs cannot act as primary care physicians in Maryland, they can play an important role in the natural treatment of disease as well as in enhancing health and wellness.

Naturopathic physicians may provide a full range of counseling services, including: lifestyle modification and health coaching by promotion of wellness through support of exercise, good sleep, detoxification, stress reduction and other lifestyle modifications such as advice about diet, nutritional issues, nutritional supplementation including herbal and botanical substances; offer homeopathic remedies which are highly dilute naturally occurring plant, animal, and mineral substances to gently stimulate healing responses; massage and body work therapies; and use other natural remedies, such as the application of hot or cold, hydrotherapy, the use of water applications to the body, electromagnetic therapy, phototherapy or light therapy and corrective and orthopedic gymnastics.

Nature of Services: A naturopathic doctor is not a medical doctor and naturopathy is not a medical specialty but a separate and distinct health care tradition. Dr. Martin graduated from an accredited four-year residential graduate program and is licensed in Maryland as a naturopathic doctor. The scope of practice is limited to specific practices set forth in Health Occupations Article, Section 14-5F-14. This scope includes complete physical examination, laboratory and physiologic testing and the ordering of diagnostic imaging but does not include prescribing, administering or injecting drugs, surgery or high-velocity osteopathic/chiropractic adjustments.

Naturopathic medicine is not intended to substitute for diagnosis or treatment by medical physicians or used as an alternative to necessary medical care, and a patient should not avoid any diagnostic work-up suggested by his/her medical physician as a result of naturopathic diagnosis or treatment. If you believe that you have a condition that requires medical care, you should consult your primary care doctor or an appropriate specialist. It is important that you maintain regular visits with your primary care doctor and medical specialists as appropriate, both to ensure proper medical care and because Dr. Martin is not affiliated with a local hospital and you should have a medical doctor who can provide care in the event of an emergency or hospitalization. When appropriate, Dr. Martin may communicate with members of your health team regarding your conditions, treatment options, and/or any other health related issues. You agree to follow-up on referrals made by Dr. Martin for medical care. If you wish to discontinue or avoid any medical treatment in favor of naturopathic care, this should be discussed with both Dr. Martin and the treating physician.

After an introductory visit and on an ongoing basis, Dr. Martin will explain her assessment and describe the nature of her recommendations, expected health progress, and the anticipated costs, risks, benefits and experience of following assorted options.

Additionally, Dr. Martin will be spending time outside your face-to-face visit hours as needed to study your case for homeopathic remedy recommendations, determine appropriate laboratory work-up to order and interpret findings, consult with your other practitioners, answer your emails and questions and chart your progress.

The focus of naturopathic care is to alleviate the underlying conditions that bring about illness rather than the treatment of symptoms. While patients may experience some immediate improvement from the use of supplements, herbs, homeopathic remedies or other botanical and naturopathic methods, the most effective results occur when clients make a long-term commitment to rebuild their health.

Telemedicine appointments: Dr. Martin offers telemedicine appointments as an alternative to in-office face-to-face consultations. Telemedicine visits are a highly secure HIPPA compliant interactive audio-visual medical consultation. Dr Martin shall maintain the privacy and confidentiality in accordance with all federal and state legal requirements. If Dr Martin determines that a telemedicine consultation is not clinically appropriate or in the best interest of the patient she may refuse telemedicine services at any time and request a patient attend an in-office visit. Patients have the right to decline Telehealth service at any time without affecting their right to future care or treatment and may terminate the Telehealth encounter at any time.

Emergency Notice: Dr. Martin does not provide any hospital-based services. If a difficulty occurs with any remedies or other aspects of naturopathic work, you will contact her during business hours when possible to discuss any concerns. See our additional phone/email policy. In the event of an emergency, you will contact 911 or my primary care physician as needed.

Potential Risks: As with any method of care, naturopathic medicine can involve some risk. Clients may experience an aggravation of pre-existing symptoms, or have aches, pains, or even new symptoms as the body responds to treatment. This is generally a positive sign and shows the body is making positive movement. Some people may experience a “healing crisis,” a short period in which symptoms worsen or a period of a flu-like illness with mild fever, chills, dizziness, loss of appetite, or similar symptoms. Such an experience can signal the body is detoxifying.

While herbs and botanical products are generally available over-the-counter and are considered safe based upon their long history of use, many of them have not been widely tested. Negative reactions to natural remedies may include rare allergic reactions, including headaches, itching, hives, difficulty breathing, and very rarely, even shock or death. Interactions between herbs, and drugs your physician might prescribe are not yet well known, and while unlikely, clients can have an adverse reaction or experience a reduction or increase in the effect of other medications. Negative reactions to homeopathy are extremely rare given the doses used; an effective dose may result in a temporary increase in your symptoms or healing crisis. Massage and bodywork may exacerbate muscle and joint pain, which is generally but not always temporary and part of the healing process.

Good Communication: Even the gentlest methods may cause complications, particularly in certain physiological conditions such as pregnancy, lactation, or in very young children, very elderly patients, those on multiple medications, or those with specific diseases such as diabetes or of the heart, liver, or kidney. It is important that patients inform, and continue to fully inform their doctor and physicians of any medical history, family history, medications and/or supplements being taken currently (prescription and over-the-counter). Supplements and remedies or significant lifestyle changes could have serious

consequences for some medications, such as for the control of high blood pressure or blood sugar. It is particularly important to let your medical physician know about herbs and supplements prior to surgery or other procedures.

Notice to Pregnant Women: All female clients must alert Dr. Martin if they know or suspect that they are pregnant, could become pregnant, or are nursing to ensure that remedies are not used that could present a risk.

No Guarantees: Consultations, as in any matter regarding health, are an art as well as science, and no guarantees can be made as to any positive outcomes or the absence of side effects. Dr. Martin will attempt to educate patients about the risks, benefits and alternatives to proposed therapies but cannot anticipate and explain all possible risks and complications.

Insurance Notice/Financial Responsibility: Naturopathic medicine is not a covered service or recognized by Medicare, private insurance, or other third-party payers. Reimbursement may not be available from your insurance carrier for these services. However, if your insurance plan offers "Out of Network" reimbursement you may be able to receive some amount of reimbursement for your visit. You will need to submit to your insurance company a super bill (receipt) from Sunlight Natural Health for your visit. You are financially responsible for full payment at the time of initiating your contract period.

If you fail to complete payment of your package, there will be no obligation on the part of Dr Martin or Sunlight Natural Health to provide services and this agreement is null and void. It is your primary responsibility to utilize the services associated with this package. No prorated or reimbursement shall be issued for any unused portion of your package.

Supplement Sales: Dietary supplements and remedies are available for sale, both for your convenience and to make high-quality products available. Dr. Martin makes a usual and customary mark-up on these products. You are free to purchase similar products from the source of your choosing. Doing so will not affect the quality of care provided.

Laboratory kit sales: Dr Martin may recommend functional laboratory testing from Private labs which may not be covered by your medical insurance. In the event that you are recommended such laboratory work-up the cost and benefits will be fully explained. If you choose to proceed with the recommended testing Sunlight Natural Health will accept payment at the time you receive the lab kit. **Please note all lab kit sales are final and may not be returned for reimbursement.**

Missed Appointments: All appointment **cancellations or rescheduling requests must be received no later than 2 full open business days prior to the day of your scheduled appointment.** (i.e Monday appointment cancelation/ rescheduling must be made by 5pm the prior Wednesday. Missed appointments will be deducted from your package if not cancelled in accordance with this cancellation policy. *(Please help us serve you better by keeping your regularly scheduled appointments.)* Exceptions may be made in the event of a documented personal or family medical emergency. Traffic and any other personal or work related commitments will not negate a full missed appointment.