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Press release from May 4th 2015

Nationally qualified Naturopath becomes a reality.

On April 28 2015 the State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation (SBFI) approved the advanced professional examination for Naturopaths. This ensures the nationally-recognised and protected title: Naturopathic practitioner with Advanced Federal Diploma of Professional Education and Training.

The profession recognizes four specific therapeutic fields: Ayurvedic Medicine, Homeopathy, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and Traditional European Naturopathy (TEN). Thus, a core requirement of the constitutional article 118a for the establishment of national diplomas for non-medical professions in the field of complementary medicine is fulfilled.

The profession of naturopathic practitioner has a long-standing tradition in Switzerland and is an important component of the health system. Today there are approximately 2500 naturopathic practitioners working throughout Switzerland. A naturopathic practitioner with an Advanced Federal Diploma can be defined as a specialized professional within the general health system who treats, advises, cares for and supports patients with health problems in the context of a comprehensive alternative medicine system. In this role, the therapist makes an evaluation of the patient's state, to establish that a treatment with alternative medicinal means is suitable, and appropriate, without endangering their health, and ensures that the patient will be competently guided through the various stages of their illness or disorder. The new Advanced Federal Diploma guarantees a uniform standard and high quality treatment.

In April 2015 the State Secretary for Education, Research and Innovation (SBFI), following a fifteen year period of regulation process, approved the examination procedure for the advanced professional examination for Naturopaths.

Since 2015 training is available within the Swiss education facilities in the four approved therapeutic fields- Ayurvedic Medicine, Homeopathy, Traditional Chinese Medicine TCM and Traditional European Naturopathy TEN – enabling graduation with the advanced professional national diploma. Currently practicing therapists may also take this examination.

The new federal occupational profile and the advanced professional examination was developed by the Organization of the professional world of alternative medicine Switzerland OdA AM (www.oda-am.ch). This is the umbrella organization of eleven professional associations of alternative medicine and under the supervision of the SBFI, has to fulfil the mandate of the Swiss population who voted for reintroduction and recognition of complementary medicine within the health system in 2009.

Therapists currently working in the four specialized areas of treatment have the opportunity, during a seven year period of transition, to apply to take the advanced examination.

For the secure future for Naturopathic practitioners, it is essential that all health insurance companies will agree to reimburse treatment costs through the supplementary insurance scheme (an



additional insurance policy that many Swiss hold, to cover costs of complementary and alternative health treatments. Ed)

The regulation of professions within the natural medicine field is a pilot project and is valued as pioneer work within Europe.

The approval of the examination procedure for the advanced professional examination for Naturopaths by the SBFI is expected within the next weeks. Thus, the establishment of a national diploma for non-medical therapists will have been achieved.

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