



NCNM's Dr. Tabatha Parker Takes Naturopathic Medicine Global

(August 4, 2014) – The National College of Natural Medicine (NCNM) has a long, rich history that connects naturopathic medicine with the profession's luminaries dating back to Dr. Benedict Lust and his mentor, Father Knipp. Since its founding in Portland, Oregon in 1956, NCNM has graduated many of the profession's most illustrious naturopathic physicians, whose contributions to patient health care, research and medicine have advanced the profession far beyond anything NCNM's founders might have imagined. New generations of naturopathic graduates are taking their place alongside some of their celebrated forebears, including, prominently, Tabatha Parker, ND.

A visionary committed to social justice and international healthcare change, Dr. Parker is the co-founder and executive director of Natural Doctors International (NDI) – the world's oldest naturopathic global health organization in North America. She has led the groundbreaking organization in developing the first permanent global naturopathic clinic in Nicaragua, as well as naturopathic global health courses and inter-disciplinary internships. With a deep understanding of the complex issues global underserved patients face in health care, she is helping to bridge the gap that exists between conventional medicine and indigenous healers by establishing permanent naturopathic medical clinics that are uniquely able to integrate these two disparate cultural approaches to medicine and health. In 2011, Utne Reader magazine recognized Parker's work by presenting her with a Visionary of the Year award, placing her among an elite group of the world's leading innovators.

Committed to educating other NDs and students about global health, she enthusiastically joined her alma mater this year to co-chair NCNM's new Master of Science in Global Health program, the first global health program offered at a naturopathic medical school. She also serves as the director of education at the Academy of Integrative Health & Medicine (AIHM), the leading provider of education and certification of health professionals in integrative holistic care.

Parker strives to use her activism in natural medicine to inspire both students and doctors to become active globally and bring natural medicine to underdeveloped countries, serving those in overwhelming need of care. After years of immersion in such work, she understands the need to work inter-professionally and collaboratively to further the profession of naturopathic medicine. She has worked, for example, with the World Health Organization on the WHO Benchmarks for Training in Naturopathy.

Her advocacy for bringing naturopathic medicine to those most in need of health care continues to grow. Most recently Parker, along with Dr. Michael Cronin (NCNM '80), became the first NDs to attend the World Health Assembly of the World Health Organization. Their mission was to gather information on forming a World Naturopathic Federation.

At the second annual International Congress of Naturopathic Medicine held in Paris in July 2014, the executive committee of that impressive assembly of naturopathic physicians also had a strong interest in the formation of an internationally recognized naturopathic federation. When the idea received an outpouring of support from all parts of world, Parker and Dr. Jonathan Wardle, a naturopathic physician from Australia, spearheaded discussions at the event to create a federation. The unanimous decision from broad global naturopathic leadership resulted in the historic formation of a new organization, the World Naturopathic Federation, which will advance the naturopathic profession globally in a way that has not been possible before. Plans are underway to launch the new organization, including a new website: www.worldnaturopathicfederation.org.

Like NCNM's founders and a long line of naturopathic graduates who have made trailblazing contributions to health care and education, Tabatha Parker, ND, is passionate about advancing the profession throughout the world, from the academic classrooms of medical schools to the clinics serving the world's most underserved patients. Now her longstanding mission to serve such populations is gaining momentum through the unified efforts of naturopathic physicians the world over.