

## 2015 BINM Alumni Survey Results

### Response Rate

We surveyed 223 alumni who graduated between 2004 and 2013, of which 74 completed the survey for a 33.2 %response rate.

### Response Rate by Graduation Year

Grad Year	Total Graduates by year	Working emails	Complete Responses	Response rate by grad year	Response rate from working emails
2004	11	10	5	45.4%	50%
2005	16	16	5	31.3%	31.3%
2006	17	15	8	47.1%	53.3%
2007	16	14	4	25.0%	28.6%
2008	13	12	6	46.2%	50%
2009	28	24	8	28.6%	33.3%
2010	35	33	14	40.0%	42.4%
2011	36	32	9	25.0%	28.1%
2012	32	32	7	21.9%	21.9%
2013	37	35	8	21.6%	22.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>241</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>30.7%</b>	<b>33.2</b>

### Licensure

97% of respondents indicated they are currently licensed as a Naturopathic Doctor (ND). The majority of respondents who are licensed (85.3%) practice in BC.

### Career Satisfaction

84% of respondents indicated they are ‘satisfied’ or ‘very satisfied’ with their decision to become a Naturopathic Doctor.

Here are a few quotes from respondents regarding career satisfaction

*“Being an ND is great. So much flexibility with our license. The greatest advantage is that we are not bound by specialties... which allows me to help a patient in ALL ways--only restrained by my abilities and resources.” 2004 graduate*

*“I have my dream job and I couldn't ask for anything more out of a career! Amazing network of colleagues and a wonderful lifestyle. LOVE, LOVE, LOVE being an ND.” 2006 graduate*



*“Working with patients is very satisfying in itself. But it's been a long road with many ups & downs... Learning how to run a business has been a huge learning curve on top of the demands of practice.... But after 3 years, I've done well. It only gets better and easier. All the hard work is paying off.” 2011 graduate*

## **Graduates in Practice**

88% of respondents are currently practicing. Of the respondents who are currently not in practice, 75% cited ‘raising children’ as one of the reasons why they are currently not in practice.

## **Gross Income**

Sixty-two respondents indicated a gross annual income for 2014. The mean gross income of respondents from ND-employment sources was \$145,903.

**Note:** this figure factors in all survey respondents regardless of number of hours worked per week (see ‘patient contact hours’ below for gross income information based off hours worked per week).

**Note:** this survey did not gather data for net income. As NDs typically run a private practice their business models and expenses vary widely. For example, some NDs run their own practice out of a rented office while others own a multi-disciplinary clinic where they employ other healthcare practitioners.

In 2010 the National College of Natural Medicine (NCNM) in Portland conducted an income survey of alumni who reported 25 or more hours of employment per week. The survey gathered data on both gross and net income and reported a mean and median for each. [The results of the NCNM survey](#) indicate that alumni netted the following percent of their reported gross income:

- 0-4 years in practice netted approximately 39% of their gross annual income;
- 5-9 years in practice netted approximately 40% of their gross annual income;
- 10-14 years in practice netted approximate 37% of their gross annual income;
- 15-19 years in practice netted approximately 41% of their gross annual income.

The percentages reflected are based off of mean gross income for all respondents. NCNM defined net income as “income after expenses and before taxes.” NCNM gathered both gross and net income but did not calculate the netted percentage of gross income (BINM made this calculation from the data provided in the NCNM survey for purposes of this report).

The NCNM survey reveals that practicing NDs who report a minimum 25 hour work week net approximately 40% of their gross income before taxes. Using the data from the NCNM survey and applying the approximate 40% net to the mean gross income from the 2015 Boucher Alumni Survey of \$145,903, respondents to the Boucher survey would have netted approximately \$58,361 in 2014 before taxes (note: this calculation was provided by the Boucher survey team to offer a rough idea of what an ND nets before taxes).



The National College of Natural Medicine Income and Employment Report is available [here](#).

### **Income Satisfaction: Practicing NDs**

Nearly 70% of respondents in practice reported ‘very satisfied’, ‘satisfied’ or ‘neutral’ income satisfaction. 22% reported ‘very satisfied’ and 34% reported ‘satisfied’. For NDs with eight or more years of experience, 47% reported they were ‘very satisfied’ with their income.

### **Practice Location by Population**

The majority (58%) of respondents practice in a large urban centre (>250,000), 19% in a small city (50,000 to 249,999) while 14.5% practice in a town (10,000 to 49,999). Those naturopathic doctors that practice in a small city reported the highest gross income at \$174,538 relative to the overall average of \$145,903.

### **Employment Setting**

Just over 30% of respondents indicate they practice in a multidisciplinary clinic, while 29% practice in multiple practice settings and 26% share a private practice with other NDs. Those who share a private practice with other NDs had the highest gross annual income of \$232,519 (mean gross) from all sources.

### **Patient Contact Hours**

Survey respondents were asked to indicate the total number of patient contact hours they average per week from the following choices: 0-10, 11-20, 21-25 and 26+. The survey designers considered 26+ hours to be full time (based off of a 40 hour work week with an average appointment length of one hour to 90 minutes not including administrative time). Respondents were also asked to indicate if they ‘limited their patient contact time by choice’ or not (many NDs work part-time to take care of children or as a lifestyle choice).

22% indicated they have a full patient load while 27% elect to limit their patient contact hours by choice. Half of the respondents indicated insufficient patient numbers, with the majority (59%) of those having 11-20 patient contact hours per week and less than five years work experience.

Of the 17 naturopathic doctors who chose to limit their patient contact hours, 65% cited ‘raising children’ as the main reason.

The mean gross income of respondents in practice who reported 26 or more patient contact hours per week was \$283,642. The mean gross income of respondents who reported limiting their patient contact hours ‘by choice’ was \$171,588. The mean gross income of respondents who reported ‘insufficient patient numbers (25 or less hours per week) was \$69,612.



## **Practice Ownership**

50% of all practicing NDs indicated they own a practice while 71% indicated they opened a practice within two years of graduation from the program.

Nearly 30% of respondents own a private practice with other NDs, 22% own a solo private practice and 19% own a multidisciplinary clinic. 26% own a practice and have secondary employment in areas such as research, government and the natural products sector.

The mean gross income for the tax year ending in December 2014 ranged from \$91,286 for respondents who own a solo private practice, to \$279,111 for owners of a shared private practice with other NDs - a difference of 67%. When all sources of income were included, those who owned a shared private practice with other NDs had a mean gross income of \$323,888.

## **Employment Location: Practice Ownership**

Of the 31 respondents who own a practice, nearly 40% own a practice in a large urban centre (>250,000) while 29% own a practice in a small city (50,000 to 249,999) and 23% own a practice in a town (10,000 to 49,999).

The mean gross income varied widely as indicated by the chart below.

## **Gross Mean Income Practice Ownership by Location (n=31)**

## **Conclusion**

The survey results reveal a high practice rate as well as high career satisfaction. When the six alumni who indicated they were not in practice 'to raise children' are excluded (assuming they will return to practice at some point) the practice percentage is nearly identical to the licensure rate (95.9% relative to 97.3% overall). Clearly Boucher graduates are both happy with their career choice and are able (at this point in their careers) to justify staying in practice regardless of whatever challenges they face.

This survey represents the first time the Boucher Institute has gathered income data from alumni spanning a ten year period in practice (two years in practice to eleven years in practice). Only gross income data was collected and certainly future surveys need to include net income figures to more thoroughly assess how well alumni are doing financially in practice. However, with 70% of alumni reporting 'very satisfied', 'satisfied' or 'neutral' with income it appears that the earning potential of naturopathic doctors is meeting expectations at most points of their careers. In general, career satisfaction appears to increase with experience as 73% of those naturopathic



doctors who reported 'dissatisfied' or 'very dissatisfied' have less than five years of practice experience.

50% of alumni own a practice, which is a somewhat surprising statistic considering that 62.9% of respondents who are in practice graduated between 2009 and 2013. It was assumed by the researchers that graduates typically do not open their own business until about five years in practice due to factors such as student debt loads, overhead in starting a business, insufficient patient numbers, risk and a lack of confidence and experience. Even more unexpected is that nearly 50% of those that own a practice opened it within one year of graduation, and 71% opened a practice within just two years of finishing the Boucher program. The far higher gross mean income of those that own a practice relative to those that do not (58.1%), however, is quite likely one of the main motivating factors for naturopathic doctors to start their own business.