



**Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education**  
1747 N. Market Blvd. Ste 225 Sacramento, CA 95834  
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**APPEAL OF CITATION INFORMAL CONFERENCE**  
**DECISION: CITATION AFFIRMED**

December 17, 2021

Steve Schechter, Owner  
Natural Healing Institute Naturopathy, Inc.  
2240 Encinitas Blvd., Suite D, SPC 370  
Encinitas, CA 92024

Date of Issuance	Citation Number	Institution Code
December 17, 2021	2021253	Unapproved

On November 10, 2021, an informal telephone conference was held in the matter of Citation: Assessment of Fine and Order of Abatement No. 2021253 (Citation) against Steve Schechter, Owner of Natural Healing Institute Naturopathy, Inc. (Institution). In attendance were Jason Alley, Enforcement Chief and Steve Schechter, Owner.

Pursuant to Business and Professions Code, section 148; California Education Code (CEC), section 94944; and Title 5 of California Code of Regulations (5, CCR), section 75020 and section 75040, the Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education (Bureau) renders the following decision relative to your appeal of the Citation No. 2021253.

It is the decision of the Enforcement Chief that on December 8, 2021, Citation No. 2021253 is affirmed for the following reason(s):

- No new substantive facts were presented at the conference.

**VIOLATION CODE SECTIONS**

#	Below you will find the California Education Code (CEC) and/or Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations (5, CCR code) section(s) of law you are charged with violating.
1.	<p><b><u>Violation:</u></b>  <b>CEC Section 94886. Approval to Operate Required</b>  <i>“Except as exempted in Article 4 (commencing with Section 94874) or in compliance with the transition provisions in Article 2 (commencing with Section 94802), a person shall not open, conduct, or do business as a private postsecondary educational institution in this state without obtaining an approval to operate under this chapter.”</i></p> <p><b>CEC Section 94817.5. Approved to Operate or Approved</b>  <i>“Approved to operate” or “approved” means that an institution has received authorization pursuant to this chapter to offer to the public and to provide postsecondary educational programs.”</i></p>

**CEC Section 94868. To Offer to the Public**

*“To offer to the public” means to advertise, publicize, solicit, or recruit.”*

**CEC Section 94869. To Operate**

*“To operate” means to establish, keep, or maintain any facility or location in this state where, or from which, or through which, postsecondary educational programs are provided.”*

On September 4, 2020, the Bureau received a complaint alleging that the Institution was operating without Bureau approval.

From September 29, 2020 to January 22, 2021, Bureau staff and the Institution exchanged emails regarding the complaint, however, the Institution’s Owner responded to one of the several emails that was sent from the Bureau.

On March 1, 2021, Bureau staff reviewed the Institution’s website and found that the Institution was active with the ability to enroll prospective students, by selecting the “APPLY HERE” tab, and the prospective student is directed to an enrollment agreement.

The website advertises the following Residential and Distance Learning Educational Programs (with tuition fees):

- Certified Nutritionist Consultant CNC\* \$1,350.00
- Certified Clinical Master Herbalist CCMH\* \$1,350.00
- Holistic Health Practitioner HHP\* \$3,249.00
- Naturopathic Practitioner NP\* \$9,999.00
- Yoga Instructor, Somatics & Movement Therapist YISMT \$2,395.00
- Certified Massage Therapist \$5,675.00
- Exercise/Sports Therapist \$5,675.00
- Spa & Massage Therapist \$5,675.00
- Thai Massage Therapist \$768.00
- Lomi-Lomi Therapist \$816.00
- Certified Ayurvedic Wellness Consultant CAWC \$1,296.00
- Certified Clinical Master Aromatherapist CCMA \$595.00

\*Indicates distance learning

In addition, the website contained an electronic Residential and Distance Learning Catalog. The Distance Learning Catalog identified the following courses and tuition fees:

- Certified Nutritionist Consultant CNC, normally \$1,975.00 reduced to \$1,350.00
- Certified Clinical Master Herbalist CCMH, normally \$1,975.00 reduced to \$1,350.00
- Holistic Health Practitioner HHP, normally \$6,500.00 reduced to \$3,249.00
- Naturopathic Practitioner NP, normally \$22,000.00 reduced to \$9,999.00
- Certified Clinical Master Aromatherapist CCMA, normally \$1,995.00 reduced to \$1,196.00.

Additionally, the website contained a letter dated February 8, 2021, written by the Owner, addressed to New Friend & Prospective Students. The letter stated that the Institution was state-approved in 1997, the distance learning programs were state-approved in 2003, distance learning discounts for prospective new distance learning students were available until March 1, 2021, and that the rates would increase for most programs and books.

Between March 2, 2021 and March 8, 2021, Bureau staff spoke to the Owner regarding the information being advertised the Institution's website. The Owner stated that he did have an approval on file with the Bureau, that he did not need approval as he was not operating as a private postsecondary institution, and that he did not have an exemption verified by the Bureau. He confirmed that he maintained an active website for the Institution, offered distance learning, and wrote the letter posted to the website. The Owner confirmed that he received the Bureau's previously issued Order and Decision, effective April 15, 2017, and that the Decision stated that the Institution was to cease operating.

As of May 10, 2021, the Institution continues to operate without Bureau approval or a valid exemption.

**Order of Abatement:**

The Bureau orders that the Institution cease to operate as a private postsecondary educational institution, unless the Institution qualifies for an exemption under CEC section 94874. The Institution must discontinue recruiting or enrolling students and cease all instructional services and advertising in any form or type of media, including nhicollege.net, and any other websites not identified here that are associated with the Institution, until such time as an approval to operate is obtained from the Bureau. The Institution must disconnect all telephone service numbers including, but not limited to, (760) 652-6521, that are associated with the Institution until such time as an approval to operate is obtained from the Bureau. To comply with the Order of Abatement the Institution must submit a school closure plan to the Bureau pursuant to California Education Code section 94926. The Institution must provide a roster of each student currently enrolled at the Institution. The roster must include the names of the students, their contact information (including phone number, email address, and physical address), the programs in which they are enrolled, the amount paid for the programs.

**Assessment of Fine**

The fine for this violation is \$100,000.00

**TOTAL MODIFIED ADMINISTRATIVE FINE DUE: \$100,00.00**

ORDER OF ABATEMENT

**The Bureau orders that you comply with the orders described in the 'Violation Code Sections' of this document and submit evidence of compliance within 30 days from the date of this decision.**

PENALTY – ASSESSMENT OF A FINE

**Payment of the administrative fine is due within 30 days from the date of this decision.** Please complete the Payment of Fine form. Payment must be made to the Bureau by check, or money order. Please include the citation number on the payment of the fine assessment. Payment of

the administrative fine shall not constitute an admission of the violation(s) charged and shall be represented as satisfactory resolution of the matter for purposes of public disclosure. Payments may be mailed to:

Cheryl Lardizabal, Discipline Citation Program  
Bureau for Private Postsecondary Education  
1747 N. Market Blvd., Suite 225  
Sacramento, CA 95834

APPEAL OF CITATION

You *do not* have the right to request another Informal Conference to appeal this affirmed Citation. You *do*, however, have the right to appeal this affirmed Citation through an Administrative Hearing. A hearing before an Administrative Law Judge will be scheduled and you will be notified of the hearing date. The hearing will be held pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with section 11500) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

If you do not wish to appeal this modified Citation you must withdraw your initial request for an Administrative Hearing, if one was made. Please complete and mail the enclosed Withdrawal – Request for Administrative Hearing within **30 Days** of the date of this decision.

EFFECTIVE DATE OF CITATION AND FINE ASSESSMENT

This affirmed Citation is effective on **December 17, 2021**. The order of abatement and payment are due by **January 16, 2022**.

Failure to abate the violation or to pay the administrative fine within the time allowed is grounds for denial of an application for an approval to operate or discipline. The Bureau will promptly take all appropriate action to enforce the Affirmed Citation and recover the civil penalties prescribed therein or found to be due after a hearing.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any questions regarding this decision or desire further information, please contact Cheryl Lardizabal, Citation Analyst, at (916) 574-7427 or at Cheryl.Lardizabal@dca.ca.gov.

“Original Signature on File”

“12/17/2021”

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Christina Villanueva**  
**Discipline Manager**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

Enclosures

- Payment of Fine – Waiver of Appeal Rights
- Withdrawal- Request for Administrative Hearing
- Declaration of Service by Certified and First-Class Mail