

**NATIONAL  
ASSOCIATION OF  
NUTRITION  
PROFESSIONALS**



**National Association of  
Nutrition Professionals**

**LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS  
DIVISION**

# **DO I NEED A LICENSE TO PRACTICE HOLISTIC NUTRITION? THE TRUTH ABOUT LICENSURE & BILLING INSURANCE**



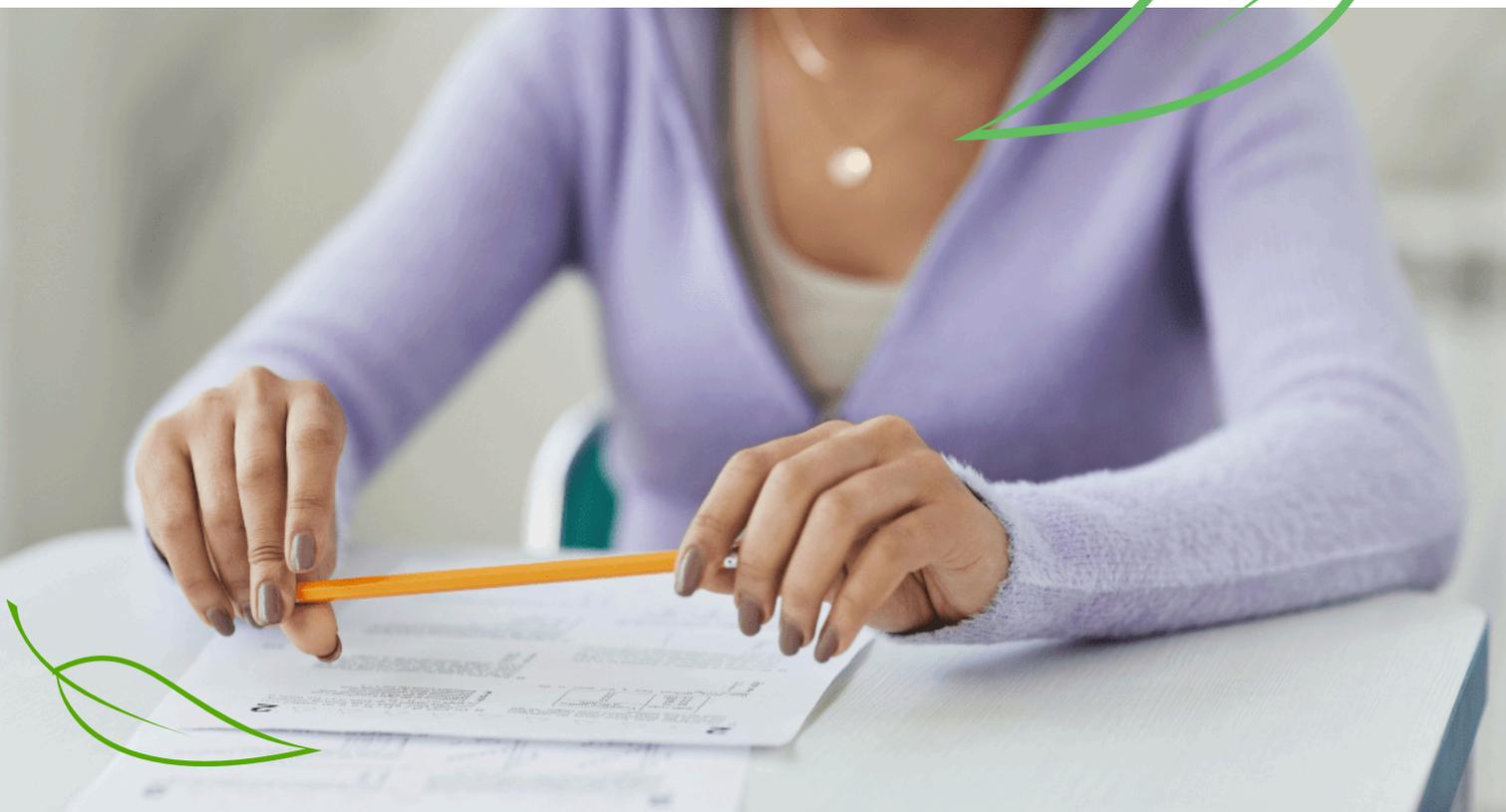
Many practitioners believe that the ability to bill insurance companies will help them build a profitable nutrition business.

The truth is, insurance reimbursement rates are significantly lower than private pay. Additionally only licensed practitioners can bill insurance companies.

## **BILLING INSURANCE REQUIRES A LICENSE**

Insurance corporations are required by regulations to contract with licensed providers and/or practitioners.

Licensure is a means by which a state determines who may provide services. Each state has their own professional licensing laws.



# THE TRUTH ABOUT INSURANCE BILLING

There are many steps that must be taken before you can bill an insurance company for services.

1. You must obtain a license.
2. You must meet their credentialing requirements.
3. You must agree to the terms of their contract and their discounted fee schedule.
4. You must learn how to prepare an insurance claim.

Following up on insurance credentialing and claims is time-consuming and requires knowledge of the corporate insurance industry.



## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN WORKING WITH AN INSURANCE COMPANY

Insurance companies are for-profit corporations beholden to shareholders who expect high rates of return. Their main objective is to make a profit.

They do this by:

- Limiting the time you spend with your client
- Determining the types of services you may provide
- Limiting the number of sessions allowed for each client
- Dictating your reimbursement rate
- Delaying claim payment

# A LITTLE BIT ABOUT LICENSURE...

Licensure requirements, such as a graduate degree, and completion of 1,000 unpaid supervised practice hours.

**LICENSURE DOES NOT  
GUARANTEE QUALITY  
OR COMPETENCE.**



Licensure can:

- limit the scope of practice by defining specific tasks and responsibilities that nutrition practitioners can perform
- add a layer of regulatory burden for professionals and employers



**CHOOSING THE RIGHT PATH  
FOR YOUR CAREER CAN BE  
CHALLENGING.**

**BE SURE YOU HAVE ALL THE  
INFORMATION BEFORE YOU  
START YOUR JOURNEY!**



# AN ALTERNATIVE TO LICENSURE

The NANP obtained a registered trademark to legally secure the title Board Certified in Holistic Nutrition®. If you live in a state where it is illegal to use specific titles associated with the word “nutrition,” and you are Board Certified, it is legal to use the Board Certified in Holistic Nutrition® credential. This credential sets you apart from other practitioners; demonstrating you are educated in holistic nutrition, understand your scope of practice, committed to continuing to learn, and have been vetted through a background check through the National Practitioner Data Bank.

*"I have worked with a lot of different licensure boards and I typically anticipate for things to be difficult and tedious. I was truly blown away by your enthusiasm and the ease of the process! I really do appreciate it."*  
*Sabrina J. Barrett*



## WHY BOARD CERTIFICATION MAY BE THE RIGHT PATH FOR HOLISTIC NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS

### What is Board Certification?

Board Certified in Holistic Nutrition® demonstrates that holistic nutrition professionals undergo the same rigors as licensed nutrition professionals. This includes getting a well-rounded education, passing a national board exam, staying on top of what’s current in our industry, meeting continuing education requirements, and undergoing a rigorous credentialing process.

## **Diverse Approaches:**

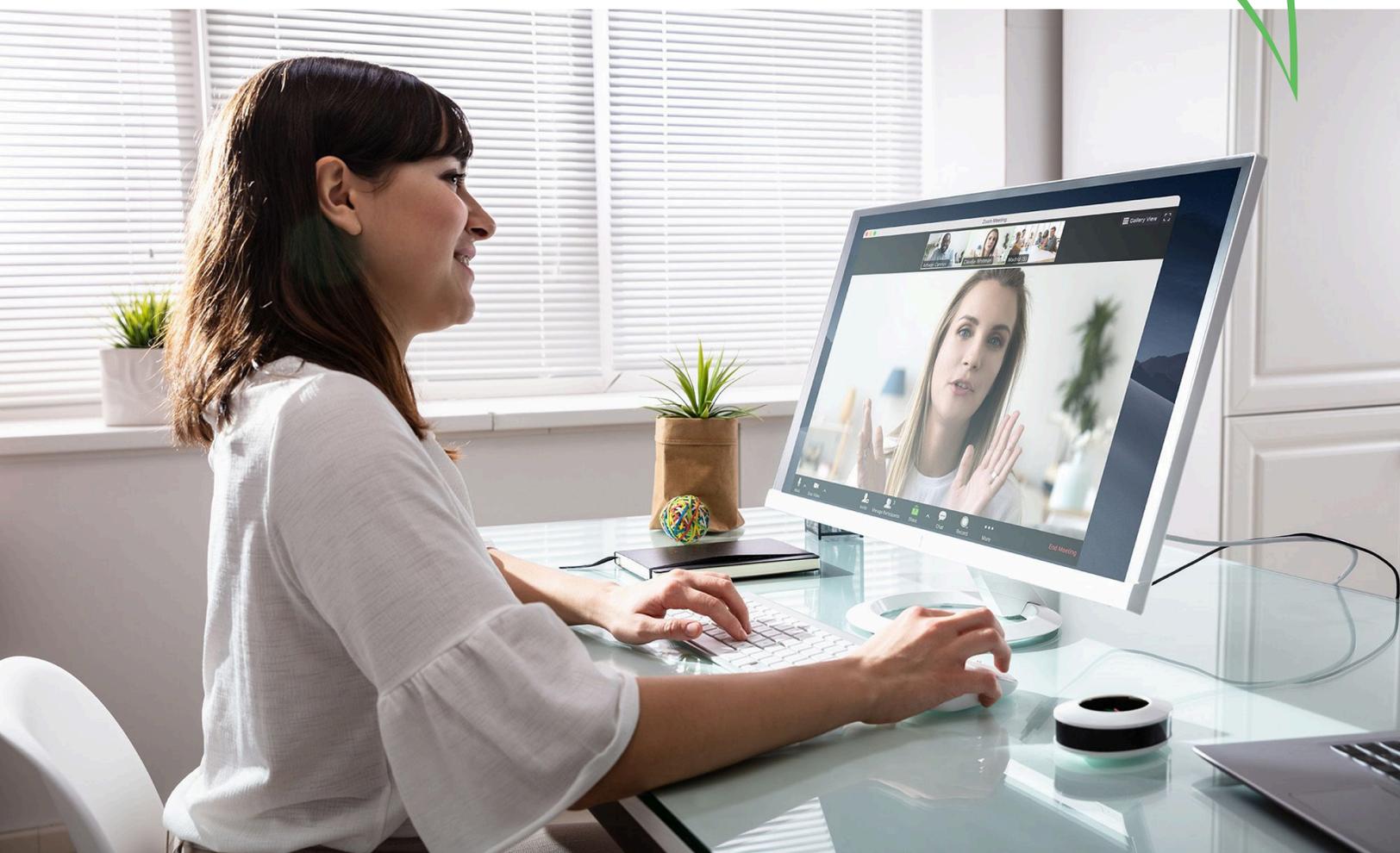
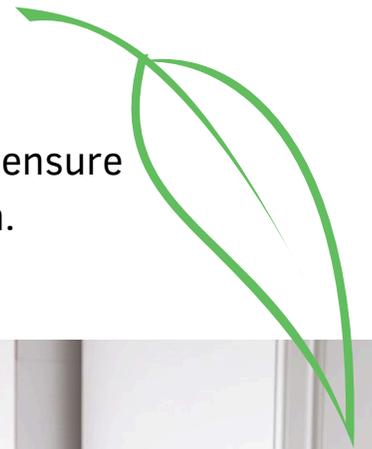
The holistic perspective embraces a broad range of science-based nutrition and lifestyle approaches that offer complimentary and alternative options to corporatized medical or dietary models. Licensing requirements typically focus on standardized education and training, which may not adequately capture the diverse modalities within holistic nutrition.

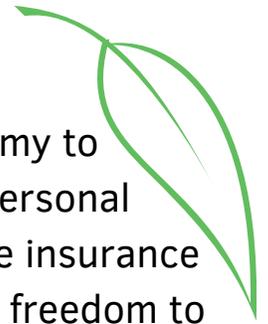
## **Ethical Standards:**

While not mandated by licensure requirements the NANP is committed to self-governance by adhering to the highest ethical standards and guidelines.

## **Educational Standards:**

The NANP offers continuing education opportunities to ensure practitioners maintain competency and professionalism.



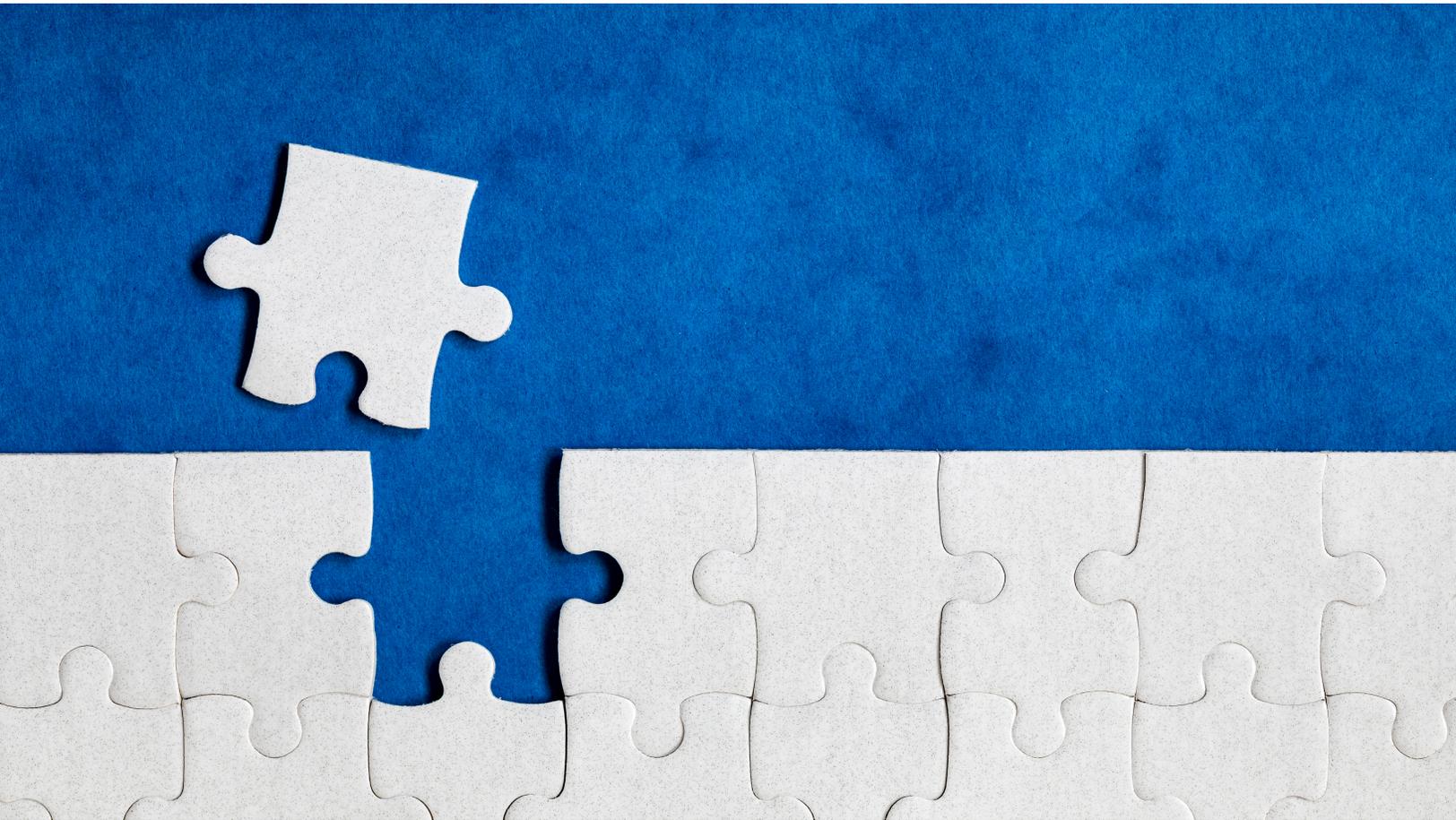


## **Client Choice:**

Clients seeking holistic nutrition services often have the autonomy to choose their practitioner based on experience, approach, and personal rapport. This is unlike the corporate medical model, in which the insurance company mandates provider choice. Practitioners also have the freedom to choose clients best suited to their skill set.

## **Freedom of Practice:**

Without stringent licensing requirements, practitioners have more flexibility to tailor their services to the individual needs of their clients.



# **PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER...**

# A COMPARISON OF EARNING POTENTIAL FOR 1:1 CONSULTATIONS

## Licensed Professionals:

Insurance companies don't pay practitioner billed charges.

Factors that will affect reimbursement include;

- State of Practice
- Insurance Allowed Session Content & Time Limits
- Client Benefit Plan Coverage
- Individual Insurance Company Reimbursement

Reimbursement rates are estimated between \$35-\$50 per session according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics.

## Holistic Nutrition BCHN®:

Holistic Nutrition Professionals bill clients privately.

Factors that affect earning potential include;

- Clients Pay for the Actual Amount of Time Spent in Session
- Practitioner Sets Pricing
- Ability to Provide a Wider Variety of Services

Session rates are estimated between \$75-\$160 per session according to a member poll from the National Association of Nutrition Professionals.

**“INSURANCE BILLING IS **NOT** ALWAYS THE MOST PROFITABLE AVENUE FOR NUTRITION PROFESSIONALS”**



# A FINAL WORD ABOUT LICENSURE...

Currently, only 13 states require a license to provide nutrition services. These states typically have exemption language written into their laws allowing holistic nutrition professionals to provide general nutrition information, but not individualized nutrition plans.



## HOW WILL YOU SHARE YOUR PASSION?

To learn more about becoming board certified go to <https://nanp.org/board-certification/>



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