



## **Rotation Spotlight: Natural Standard**

By Cara Olsen, PharmD Candidate 2009

[Natural Standard](#) was founded by clinicians from Harvard Medical School and the University of California in January of 2000. Natural Standard has grown to be an international research collaboration that compiles and analyzes information on complementary and alternative therapies for physicians, pharmacists and other healthcare providers to use to make more informed therapeutic decisions. With more and more patients turning to alternative therapies everyday, it is important for healthcare professionals to have a reference to use to assess the risks and benefits of the products their patients are using.

[Natural Standard](#) is recognized as the premier source of information in the areas of complementary and alternative therapies. Areas of coverage include herbs, dietary supplements, vitamins, minerals, modalities such as acupuncture, and commercial diets such as the “Zone Diet”. For each entry, Natural Standard gathers scientific data and expert opinions and also conducts literature searches on many online databases and compiles all of this information into a monograph that is essentially an evidence based review of what is known and what is not known about each product or therapy.

This information is provided to healthcare professions through many outlets. In addition to a variety of books and other publications, the Natural Standard website offers many [searchable databases](#) including: Herbs & Supplements, Health & Wellness, Comparative Effectiveness, Medical Conditions, Brand Names, and Interactions. In addition to the databases there are also [interactive calculators, a dictionary, podcasts and continuing education modules](#). Natural Standard also offers a free newsletter, blog, audio/podcasts that can be accessed via their website or emailed to your inbox on a monthly basis via RSS feed.

The rotation available to Drake Pharmacy students at Natural Standard is meant to introduce students to complementary and alternative medicine information, resources and practices. The student will learn research methodology to be applied towards authoring a monograph and eventually will be fully integrated into the monograph production process and assigned research topics.

Rotation students at this site also have the unique ability to be able to participate in an average of one site visit every week, to sites where alternative medicine is practiced. Students can observe chiropractic and acupuncture practices as well as yoga, hypnosis, meditation and several lectures on the topic of complementary and alternative medicine. Natural Standard offers students the opportunity to experience a very unique practice setting. Students interested in writing, editing, research, drug information and alternative pharmacy careers will thrive in this rotation.