



NH Association for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine

A Voice for Oriental Medicine in the Granite State

www.nhaaom.org

February 19, 2009

Greetings,

This is a letter of support for HB373, which allows an acupuncturist to be reimbursed for his or her services directly from an insurance carrier if such services are provided through the insurance policy. Acupuncture has gained popularity nationwide and is being widely studied by the scientific community. As this trend continues, insurance coverage for acupuncture is also becoming more common. Insurance companies are making acupuncture affordable and available to a segment of the population that would otherwise find this form of healing beyond their reach.

Presently, insurance companies in the state of New Hampshire can choose to approve a claim for acupuncture when performed by a physician and reject a claim if performed by a licensed acupuncturist. Licensed acupuncturists are board certified by the National Commission for Certification in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. They are specialists in providing acupuncture and have over 2,000 hours of Master's degree level training through nationally accredited schools.

Other professionals may also receive certification to perform acupuncture with far less education that averages from 100-500 hours of training. Physician acupuncturists may receive certification to provide acupuncture after completion of 300 hours of training. The training has no required educational standards and there is no qualifying examination required at completion of the training. Acupuncture is a 4,000 year old medical art, rooted in ancient Chinese philosophy. Licensed acupuncturists are qualified providers with the extensive training that is necessary to practice a medical art of such depth and complexity. Currently, there are only eight physicians certified to practice acupuncture in New Hampshire. This is unfortunate, as it restricts access to quality care.

To sharply restrict patients' access to quality acupuncture care by limiting their choices to these few physician acupuncturists and other professionals certified to provide acupuncture is inappropriate and does a disservice to the citizens of New Hampshire. The current legislation is at best, outdated and at worst, discriminatory. HB373 corrects the current problem by requiring insurance companies that choose to cover acupuncture care to do so whether performed by a licensed or certified acupuncturist. Insurance parity for acupuncture is already law in California, Florida, Maine, New York and Oregon. This bill does not mandate insurance coverage for acupuncture, but simply removes unnecessary restrictions on patient access to care.

The New Hampshire Association for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NHAAOM) is the state level professional organization of licensed acupuncturists. NHAAOM is invested in improving the current legislation regarding insurance coverage for acupuncture care and strongly supports HB373. We ask you to support these measures for the benefit of the healthcare consumers of New Hampshire.

Sincerely,

Lucinda Fecteau, PhD, MAOM, OT/L

President, New Hampshire Association for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine