

Dear State Legislator,

Alabama is one of only six states that have yet to adopt laws to license acupuncturists. As a healthcare seeking voter, I am in favor of safe and fair laws regulating the practice of acupuncture in Alabama. I am also in favor of state mandated educational standards, to include certificate programs, that meet or exceed the national standard of education for this profession.

I have learned that to become a nationally certified acupuncturist requires:

- Graduation from a formal, full-time acupuncture program of at least three years duration that has been accredited or is in candidacy for accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM). The ACAOM is the only accrediting body recognized by the United States Department of Education as the authority for quality education and training in acupuncture and Oriental medicine. ACAOM requires 1,905 hours of entry-level acupuncture education (2,175 hours if the degree is in Oriental medicine) for accreditation.
- Passage of certification examinations in Foundations of Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture, and Biomedicine. administered by the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM).
- Adherence to the tenants of the NCCAOM code of ethics.
- Completion of separate courses in Clean Needle Technique and CPR.

Since 1973 when Maryland, Nevada and Oregon became the first states to pass laws regulating acupuncture and Oriental medicine, other states have slowly implemented their own. It is time for Alabama to join the great majority of states in assuring only qualified professionals will be practicing acupuncture.

Acupuncture and other complimentary therapies will be part of the healthcare landscape in years to come as evidenced in recent studies and recommendations by the National Institutes of Health.

In September of 2008, Alabama Commission of Higher Education took an important step by implementing USDE standards that apply to programs of study for acupuncture. However, these standards fail to address certificate programs and therefore need to be amended by the legislature to achieve the goal of assuring quality education and practice in this state. The logical next step in these educational efforts would be legislative action to regulate the profession of acupuncturist through a licensing process that will raise standards in the state of Alabama to the national level.

Without state regulation, the public has no way to confirm whether a practitioner is truly qualified or not. After successful passage of a fair acupuncture act with your support, citizens of Alabama will be assured that they are making a safe healthcare choice.