



Public Protection Through Quality Credentials

**National Certification Commission
for Acupuncture and Oriental
Medicine**

**11 Canal Center Plaza, Suite 300
Alexandria, VA 22314
Phone: 703/548-9004
Fax: 703/548-9079**

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Contact: Mina Larson
mlarson@nccaom.org

MICHIGAN PASSES FIRST ACUPUNCTURE LAW

*National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine to Become the
Regulatory Certification Commission for the State*

LANSING, MICH. (April 3, 2006) – A 20-year, arduous journey has come to an end for acupuncture and Oriental medicine practitioners and proponents living in Michigan. Governor Jennifer Granholm signed SB 351, the state’s first law regulating acupuncture, into effect on Feb. 23, 2006, making Michigan the 41st state to implement laws regulating the practice of acupuncture. The first call of duty is to establish a board of esteemed licensed acupuncturists, physicians and two public members and establish NCCAOM as the certification commission for the state. Today, there are fewer than 100 NCCAOM-certified Diplomates practicing acupuncture in Michigan, but with the new law creating legal standards for the state, more are guaranteed to come.

For the past three years, the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM), the Michigan Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (MAAOM), the American Acupuncture Council (AAC), and the American Association of Oriental Medicine (AAOM) worked unstintingly to get a law passed.

“The law certainly will ensure that Michigan will move into the category of states that have high standards for acupuncture and Oriental medicine,” said Betsy Smith, Associate Deputy Director for NCCAOM. “It means citizens will be better protected and the state will attract top acupuncturists. When you raise the standards, you attract highly qualified practitioners.”

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese medicine treatment that relies on the painless but strategic placement of hair-like needles into 365 key points called meridians along the entire body. The needles unlock sluggish or dead energy and bring balance to the body spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally. It is a low-cost, non-invasive treatment with zero adverse side effects and one that dates back more than 2,000 years.

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Today, many patients and doctors consider acupuncture a mainstream complementary treatment. In fact, according to NCCAOM, one in 10 adults has had acupuncture, making it one of the most popular forms of alternative medicine.

Since Maryland, Nevada and Oregon became the first states to pass laws on acupuncture and Oriental medicine in 1973, the rest of the states have slowly implemented laws of their own. Seven states, including Alabama, Delaware, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Wyoming, still have no regulatory laws for the practice of acupuncture. In most of these states, only physicians and osteopaths, often with little or no formal education in acupuncture, are allowed to practice. As a result, healthcare consumers in these states may not experience the full efficacy of acupuncture treatment. In addition, there is a potential for an unqualified individual to claim that he or she is an acupuncturist and the public has no way to confirm the validity of his or her expertise.

“It’s very scary that there is no one monitoring who is practicing acupuncture, if they’re qualified or even if the needles are sterile,” said registered nurse and licensed acupuncturist, Deborah Lincoln, NCCAOM Diplomate of Acupuncture. Along with the help of other Michigan practitioners, Lincoln worked tirelessly for the passage of this legislation. Lincoln voiced her concern that “It could be harmful to the public to be exposed to non-qualified practitioners. That’s very worrisome to me.”

Lincoln, President of the MAAOM and Vice President of the AAOM, said all states should not only pass the necessary laws but should also designate NCCAOM certification as the requirement for determining entry-level competence. NCCAOM is already recognized in 95% of the states that regulate acupuncture.

About the NCCAOM

The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) is a non-profit organization established in 1982. Its mission is to establish, assess and promote recognized standards of competence and safety in acupuncture and Oriental medicine for the protection and benefit of the public.

It is a considerable professional achievement to earn the designation “Diplomate in Acupuncture (NCCAOM).” NCCAOM certification indicates to employers, patients and peers that one has met national standards for the safe and competent practice of acupuncture as defined by the profession. The first NCCAOM Comprehensive Written Examination (CWE) in Acupuncture (ACP) was given in March 1985. Since its inception, the NCCAOM has issued more than 20,000 certificates in Acupuncture, Oriental Medicine, Chinese Herbology and Asian Bodywork Therapy.

For more information on the NCCAOM, please visit its Web site at www.nccaom.org.

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