



## Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (AOM) -Vote YES for HR 646 & 676

- AOM is a fully developed, credentialed, and established medical care system in the U.S. that has shown to improve healthcare and wellness while reducing overall health costs.
- AOM is based on a complex diagnostic system designed to both prevent and treat disease; **it is well documented that preventing disease is the most cost-effective way to address health issues.**
- A 1999 Carpal Tunnel Syndrome study that showed a significant cost-savings: the average cost to treat CTS with Western medicine was \$12,000. With laser acupuncture (plus microamps TENS), the cost was \$1,000 when treated by a LAc, **with 88-90% success rate for patients who have mild-moderate CTS (the majority of cases).** (Naeser MA, Hahn K-A K, Lieberman BE, Branco KF. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Pain Treated with Low-Level Laser and Microamps TENS, A Controlled Study. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 2002; 83:978-988) The cost-savings is about \$11,000 per CTS case, and there were one million cases of CTS, **thus a potential savings of \$11 billion for one injury alone.**
- A review for cost-effectiveness performed for New Mexico estimated over \$42 billion in savings over a five year period using acupuncture (based on 500 people), randomized with five different conditions.
- Acupuncture is a minimally invasive option for many conditions. Since acupuncture produces no serious side effects, it may simultaneously alleviate symptoms while reducing the need for prescription drugs.
- AOM has little to no negative interactions with concurrent prescription drugs, has no serious side effects, and can simultaneously alleviate symptoms while decreasing the need for prescription drugs, thus reducing costly hospital stays.
- Because of its safety track record, AOM has the lowest medical malpractice rates in the country. (Approximately \$900 compared to obstetricians in southern

Florida averaging \$230,000 annually in 2002). Roberts, Richard G., MD, JD, FAAFP, *Understanding the Physician Liability Insurance Crisis, American Academy of Family Physicians* © 2002

- AOM serves a broad population in the U.S. and is used for preventive health maintenance, treatment of disease and injury, treatment of U.S. veterans, and detox from drugs and alcohol. It is also used to improve the quality of life in end-stage disease as well as to manage and treat many chronic conditions, including the side effects of cancer treatments, and reducing the amount of medications needed to control such side effects.
- The NIH considers AOM to be a whole medical system of theory and practice that has evolved independently from, or parallel to, allopathic medicine.
- AOM has been scrutinized more than any other complementary & alternative (CAM) therapy. Numerous surveys show that of all the CAM systems, acupuncture enjoys the most credibility in the medical community.
- A number of studies have proven that acupuncture is safe when administered by a licensed professional who has training in anatomy and who has the skill set required for needling. The ratio of treatments to adverse incidents is statistically extremely low.
- AOM practitioners represent this nation's most valuable untapped healthcare resource.
- Non-physician acupuncture (LAc) is regulated in 43 states and the District of Columbia.
- In forty states, AOM practitioners may practice independently per state law.
- Acupuncturists (LAc's) hold the title "Primary Care Practitioner" in 5 states.
- There are over 26,000 licensed acupuncturists in the U.S.
- Research in chronic pain has shown that 8-12 treatments are effective in the sustained alleviation of many pain syndromes.
- Healthcare settings appropriate for integration of acupuncture are post-surgical healing, neurological rehabilitation, pain management onsite and offsite, and in oncology as an adjunctive treatment for the side effects of chemotherapy as well as anxiety.
- Acupuncture can be utilized as support for outpatient services.
- Over 500 clinical trials measuring the efficacy of acupuncture have been conducted in the past three decades.

- There are 50 systematic reviews of acupuncture in the Cochrane databases, which clearly demonstrate that acupuncture is safe and offers a minimally invasive option for many conditions.

*For more information and to review the research and supporting data for this paper, please see “Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in the United States” at:*  
[www.aaaonline.org](http://www.aaaonline.org)