

News in Brief

Editorial Staff

Eastern School Gains National Accreditation

The Eastern School of Acupuncture and Traditional Medicine, located in Montclair, New Jersey, has been granted accredited status by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. ACAOM gave Eastern full accreditation at the commission's most recent meeting in May, making it the only ACAOM-accredited acupuncture institution in the state.

"This is a great day, not only for the Eastern School, but for New Jersey," declared Julie Puretz, the school's founder and president. "We started this school because we wanted patients and students in New Jersey to have greater access to acupuncture without crossing state lines."

Eastern was founded in 1997, and became a candidate for accreditation in May 2000. Students enrolled at the school undergo a three-year, 2,382-hour program that offers instruction in various styles of acupuncture, including Five Element, Japanese and French, and graduate with a master's degree in acupuncture. The school also operates a low-cost clinic that allows students to become more proficient in diagnosis and patient care while serving the public.

In related news, ACAOM re-accredited the degree programs of five institutions: the American College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (which received the maximum five years of accreditation); Five Branches Institute (four years); the New York College of Health Professions (three years); South Baylo University (four years); and Yo San University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (three years). In addition, three schools earned candidate status: the Institute of Taoist Education and Acupuncture in Louisville, Colo.; the Southern California University of Health Sciences in Whittier, Calif.; and the University of East West Medicine in Sunnyvale, Calif.

New Oriental Medicine Specialty Board Formed

In order to certify specialists in Oriental physical medicine, a group of licensed acupuncturists has formed the National Board of Oriental Physical Medicine (NBOPM). The board, which was established this spring, seeks to establish educational requirements and evaluations for certification in Oriental physical medicine, and has already identified several areas of competency in the hopes of creating recognized national standards in the field.

The board's members are: Hua Gu, LAc, PhD; Ming Dong Li, LAc, PhD; Alon Marcus, LAc, OMD; Kevin McNamee, LAc, DC; Dawn McCrory, PT, LAc; James Moran, LAc, Dipl.Ac.; Will Morris, OMD, LAc, Dipl.Ac.; Wanda Warren, AP, Dipl.Ac., PT; and Mary J. Rogel, LAc, PhD. In addition to their training in acupuncture and Oriental medicine, all of the board members have experience or professional degrees in areas such as orthopedics, athletic training, chiropractic and physical therapy.

For more information, contact the board at nbopm@yahoogroups.com.

First Stages of Doctoral Program Underway at Oregon College

In May 2002, the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine (OCOM) became the first school in the United States to receive approval to offer a doctoral degree in acupuncture and Oriental medicine. Fourteen months later, the dream of offering a doctoral program became a reality, as 21 practitioners-turned-students gathered at the school's campus in Portland to participate in the program's first module.

The module lasted from July 11 to July 14, and was intended to familiarize the students with various aspects of the program. Richard Hammerschlag, PhD, OCOM's director of research, introduced the students to the research component of the program; Dr. Viet Dzung Tran followed with a lecture on advanced acupuncture and Chinese classical texts. Additional components of the first module included a clinical theater and practice, involving patients presenting with complex and chronic immune system disorders.

"This doctor of acupuncture and Oriental medicine program will enable graduates to further the profession of acupuncture and Oriental medicine in the areas of collaboration, research, faculty development and clinical specialization," remarked OCOM President Shelley Simon, RN, DC, MPH, EdD.

OCOM's doctoral degree program lasts 25 months, and combines on-campus modules with clinical practicums, training in clinical research and design, and specialized clinical study and practice in China. Doctoral candidates may specialize in one of three categories: women's health, chronic pain management or geriatrics. Questions concerning the doctoral program can be sent to doctoraladmissions@ocom.edu.

AOM Organizations Hire Lobbyist to Promote Medicare Bill

At a meeting with representatives of eight professional acupuncture and Oriental medicine organizations in Los Angeles, Calif., the Council of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Associations (CAOMA) and the Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine National Coalition (AOMNC) signed contracts with Robert E. Marcus, JD, to represent the organizations as the lobbyist for passage of HR 1477, the Federal Acupuncture Coverage Act. Mr. Marcus intends to work with both groups to further expand the number of cosponsors to the act. His objective is to obtain 100 cosponsors, which would open the door for a hearing on the bill before the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health.

HR 1477 was introduced by Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) in March. If passed, it would amend the Social Security Act to provide for coverage of qualified acupuncturist services under Part B of the Medicare program, and amend other laws to provide for coverage of such services under the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program. As we go to press, the bill has 39 cosponsors.

"Passage of HR 1477 presents a wonderful potential for the profession. The passage of this bill will bring national and federal recognition to the profession and enhance the stature of this profession, which thus far, has not been fully accepted and embraced by the health care system of this country," said Marcus. "Having been a recipient of the many benefits of Oriental medicine for over 20 years, I say to practitioners and patients alike: Let our voices be heard, and let us now work to move Oriental medicine forward."

Information on the HR 1477 lobbying campaign can be found at www.aomnc.com and www.acucouncil.org.

Pacific College Teams With International Group to Help Torture Victims

Every year, thousands of people are tortured for their political, religious or social beliefs. Fortunately, there are many groups that exist to help torture victims through their pain and work their way back into society. One such group, Survivors of Torture International, is working with Pacific College of Oriental Medicine to provide acupuncture treatments to aid survivors in the healing process.

"Our goal is to help people get into the mainstream with jobs and education," observed David Gangsei, clinical director at Survivors of Torture. "Acupuncture is one of the treatments we have in a holistic approach to helping torture survivors."

Under the arrangement, patients receive their first four treatments at Pacific's clinic free of charge. After that, Pacific bills Survivors of Torture for the treatments, with every fourth treatment free. Patients referred by Survivors of Torture also receive any herbs they need at a 35 percent discount; herbs are also billed to the group rather than individual patients.

According to Gangsei, it's easy to see the benefits acupuncture has had on some survivors.

"Our experience has been that the clients referred to Pacific College have benefited enormously, both in terms of their symptoms and in terms of general morale," he said.

Pacific College has set up a phone number to learn more about its work with Survivors of Torture. Interested parties can contact the school at (800) 729-0941.

Davis Reappoints Two Members of Acupuncture Board

In July, California Governor Gray Davis reappointed two members of the California Acupuncture Board. Dr. Justin Tin, a public member, and Joan Chang, LAc, PhD, will both serve four-year terms and will remain on the board through June 2007.

Dr. Chang has been a member of the board since June 2001, and has more than 20 years of experience as an acupuncturist. She is a member and former vice president of the United California Practitioners of Chinese Medicine, and earned her doctorate at Samra University. Dr. Tin, a dentist by profession, was appointed to the board by Gov. Davis in April 2000. He holds a doctorate from the University of the Pacific Dental School, and is a member of the American Dental Association and the California Dental Association.

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