

## Matthew Bauer, LAc, Issues Response to California Acupuncture Board Letter

Matthew Bauer, LAc; Editorial Staff

The following letter was written by Matthew Bauer, LAc, in response to a letter sent to Mr. Bauer by the California Acupuncture Board (CAB). The CAB's letter was printed in the May issue of *Acupuncture Today*, in response to an article written by Mr. Bauer in the April issue on possible additional training and testing for California acupuncturists.

Mr. Bauer's letter will be printed in the June 2004 issue of *Acupuncture Today*.

April 6, 2004 Ms. Marilyn Nielsen  
Executive Officer  
California Acupuncture Board

Dear Ms. Nielsen:

Thank you for your letter dated March 22, 2004 and for setting the record straight about the California Acupuncture Board's (CAB) position. Although I reread/edited my article multiple times before submitting it to *Acupuncture Today*, I missed the poor choice of wording you pointed out in your letter. I apologize for any misunderstanding this has caused. I did not mean to imply the CAB supported grandfathering if entry-level education is raised to 4,000 hours. I did not know the CAB had a formal position on that, as I did not find you had shared that information with the Little Hoover Commission (LHC). I first learned of the board's position at the CSOMA conference's Saturday evening panel you referenced in your letter. The following Monday, I contacted *Acupuncture Today* and asked if I had time to make corrections to my article based on your statements but was told the article was already at the printer and no corrections could be made. As a point of clarification, though, I would hardly label my part in the brief exchange you and I had at that informal panel as "public testimony," especially considering I was just a member of the audience. That notwithstanding, I stand corrected on the wording in question in my article and retract my statement.

While I regret my choice of words, I am pleased it spurred you to use this forum to openly publicize the CAB's position on this important issue as it stands to affect everyone who holds a California acupuncturist license. It seems to me the board has put the cart before the horse by supporting legislation that would trigger a mandatory tripling of continuing education over a 10-year period while leaving the justification for such a policy and other critical details to be addressed by a future "special task force." As your letter stated, the 450 hours of continuing education the CAB supports was removed from AB 1943. My understanding is that it was removed after receiving opposition from acupuncture groups who were concerned their members would not support such requirements. My article sought to emphasize that any plan to mandate additional education of currently licensed acupuncturists would run into opposition

unless an inclusive, rational, and transparent process was enacted that could demonstrate such requirements were necessary to protect and serve the public - the sorts of things a special task force could have helped to determine. AB 1943 was passed in September 2002, leaving a full year when progress could have been made on this issue before the first Little Hoover Commission hearing.

While we are setting the record straight, I would like to point out that, contrary to the statements of some, I have no ties with any acupuncture organizations, including schools or state or national groups. I tried to remain neutral on these issues over the years, focusing my attention more on the process by which policies are reached rather than the policies themselves. While I continue to support the idea of raising education standards, I feel the process for addressing the issues necessary to achieve this has not yet been developed. In my April 2002 article for *Acupuncture Today*, "The California Debate: A Crossroads for the Ages," I pleaded with the fighting factions to hold a series of summit-style meetings to resolve these difficult issues, stating: "Such a historic meeting would require an unprecedented expenditure of time and resources, but without such a commitment, I fear we are destined to expend even more resources fighting each other and getting nowhere." This type of meeting did not take place, and we found ourselves before the LHC with emotions running high as anxiety over their coming recommendations builds.

I hesitated to write my previous article knowing I would be sticking my neck out making any public statement about the issues before LHC, but felt someone needed to get the word out that requirements for California licensed acupuncturists to continue practicing might soon be substantially elevated. I still believe the acupuncture/OM profession needs some type of summit-style meeting to resolve these issues, and perhaps, if this happens, we can kick it off by apologizing to each other for any misunderstandings the years of feuding have caused within what should have been a supportive family of advocates for an ancient healing art.

Sincerely,

*Matthew D. Bauer, LAc*

CC: California Acupuncture Board  
Little Hoover Commission

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