

News in Brief

Editorial Staff

In a unanimous decision, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board has awarded degree-granting authority to the American College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) and the Academy of Oriental Medicine at Austin (AOMA), two of the state's three existing acupuncture schools. The decision, reached at the board's most recent meeting in January, puts to rest a contentious issue regarding which agency is responsible for overseeing acupuncture colleges in Texas.

In February 2004, the state attorney general's office issued a ruling stating that schools of acupuncture were subject to regulation by the THECB, and that they could not award degrees without the board's approval. As a result, the coordinating board ordered all acupuncture schools in Texas to stop awarding degrees until they could demonstrate compliance with state accrediting standards. In October 2004, however, the board stated that it would not take enforcement action if the schools awarded degrees before receiving formal permission to do so.

The board's most recent action allows AOMA and ACAOM to officially award master's degrees in acupuncture and Oriental medicine. The Texas College of Traditional Chinese Medicine, also in Austin, plans to seek degree-granting authority from the board at its next meeting in April. The Dallas College of Oriental Medicine closed in January 2005, citing financial difficulties caused by the new accrediting standards.

New York Hospital Adds Acupuncture Services

Glens Falls Hospital in northern New York has added acupuncture to its list of therapies available for patients. The acupuncture services program will be offered at the Bay Road Rehabilitation Center, approximately six miles north of the hospital, and will be headed by Dr. Paul Alagna, a medical acupuncturist.

"We are pleased to introduce medical acupuncture services under the Glens Falls Hospital banner," said Dave Kruczynski, the hospital's chief executive officer. "Dr. Alagna brings an informed Western approach to this ancient Eastern technique, which provides patients another option to help them achieve improved health and wellness."

Glens Falls Hospital is the largest hospital between Albany, New York and Montreal, Canada, serving patients in a five-county, 2,600-square mile region in upstate New York.

MCAOM Educates Medical Students on the Finer Points of Oriental Medicine

In January, the Minnesota College of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine played host to a gathering of more than 160 students from the University of Minnesota Medical School. The purpose of the event was to introduce the students to other forms of health care, and to give them an opportunity to learn more about Oriental medicine.

"Our ultimate goal is to expose the medical students to the educational training and the

complexities of traditional Chinese medicine, in addition to opening the lines of communication between future practitioners of both forms of medicine," explained MCAOM Dean Mark McKenzie, LAc. "In this way, we will ultimately provide an opportunity for collaboration and referral among practitioners while giving patients more choice."

The event was held on the campus of Northwestern Health Sciences University. In addition to lectures and demonstrations of acupuncture, the medical students were instructed on techniques such as moxibustion and cupping.

"This event was an excellent form of exposure," enthused Peter Ragussa, a medical student who experienced a tuina treatment for the first time. "As future physicians, we need to understand this study of medicine that is approached holistically, rather than symptomatically."

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