

Positioning Acupuncture Correctly

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MPG is a very common acronym. The majority of people believe it stands for "miles per gallon." However, some creative person in the advertising world took those same letters and turned it into a slogan for a group of car dealers in Southern California: My Puente Guys. This new acronym implies trust and confidence in car dealers (an amazing feat all by itself) by changing the meaning behind a very common acronym.

I am going to take this same idea and offer up some new words for the most common meaning of the acronym: PAC, or "political action committee." In an ethics class at one of the schools, we were all participating in a discussion about contributions of acupuncturists to politics and legislation. The discussion was very lively. Then one student asked "What is a PAC, and what will it do for me?"

I was under the impression that most people knew about and understood about political action committees. I thought a great deal about this subject and decided to take some liberty and assign new words to the letters PAC. Thus the title of this article: Positioning Acupuncture Correctly.

This seems to be the year to move our profession forward. Every American, regardless of which presidential candidate they wanted to win, is worried about the current state of health care in this country. In fact, a [Reuters poll from 2007](#) cited health care as the biggest concern among Americans.

Given this, we have a golden opportunity. Hopefully, we can have the [Hinchey Bill \(H.R. 646\)](#) include acupuncture into the Medicare system, and secure a place at the national health care discussions. The profession is on the march. We must have professional representation in Washington D.C., in the person of a lobbyist, but it is also imperative that acupuncturists work in their own congressional district in each state. This would be a grass roots effort.

The most successful political campaign in recent United States history resulted in a relatively unknown candidate winning the presidency. His main advisor, [David Axelrod](#), made the decision early in the campaign to run it by working from state to state, rather than looking at it as a national campaign. This proved to be successful and gives us in the Oriental medicine profession, a successful model to follow. We must look to each state individually, as well as the individual representatives from each of those states.

There are [435 members of the House of Representatives](#) and [100 members of the Senate](#), for a total of 535 members of Congress. There are also approximately 19,000 acupuncturists in the United States. This means there are approximately 35 acupuncturists to each one elected member of Congress. When you factor in all of the patients that acupuncturists help every day, we have virtually an army of support.

We have a very straightforward task. Meet your elected Congressional representatives and their staff. Ask what they know about Oriental medicine and its benefits. Give information to these individuals and build professional relationships with them. Educate them so they will sign on to co-

sponsor the Hinchey Bill for acupuncture's inclusion into Medicare.

This grass roots effort can be done in your local congressional district. This is where you live and have your practice. You are a small-business owner and a constituent of the representative. The elected official needs your vote to stay in office. It's that simple.

The next task is to contribute money to help further these efforts. This is where giving money to a political action committee supports both local and national efforts. Small amounts of money contributed by each acupuncturist and AOM student begin to grow into larger sums. This then makes it possible to employ a lobbying firm in Washington, D.C., that reinforces your local efforts. Every acupuncturist is important in this effort. When we work together, the job is easier, we share the responsibility and everyone benefits.

Acupuncturists will benefit from this effort, but so will the millions of sick people in the United States. How will you help position acupuncture correctly to help as many people as possible?

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