

On the Move

Marilyn Allen, Editor at Large

The traditional medicine profession is on the march. This forward movement was felt and experienced at the recent national conference held in Sacramento, Calif., sponsored by the [American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine](#) (AAAOM). Members of the profession, the student organization, the [Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine](#) (CCAOM), the [National Certification Commission of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine](#) (NCCAOM) and many state association presidents were all in attendance. A sense of cohesiveness and unity was demonstrated throughout the entire conference.

Dr. Chor Seung-hoon presented information on the progress of the [World Health Organization](#) (WHO) and the international movement of this field of medicine. [Jeannie Kang, LAc](#), will be representing the United States at the upcoming meeting in Hong Kong where WHO will be discussing and revisiting the draft proposal of the *ICD* codes for traditional medicine. These codes will be included in the *ICD-11* document, which will also include an extra chapter in the book for further information and clarification. Jeannie will participate in the discussions and represent the ideas and concerns of Oriental medicine practitioners in the United States. The profession is indeed fortunate to have a strong voice in Jeannie, as she represents the profession as a whole at these important meetings. She has also just been elected to serve as vice president of AAAOM. She also serves as the co-chair of the fundraising committee.

The attendees at the AAAOM conference banquet responded positively to the presentation of [Michael Taromina, Esq.](#), regarding the fundraising and the money needed for federal lobbying efforts. They were successful in raising a grand total of \$35,000 for immediate projects.

Thursday was Acupuncture Awareness Day at the state capitol in Sacramento, and the state legislature voted to officially recognize the day. Tents were set up on the lawn outside the main entrance to the capitol where legislators and their staff were given the opportunity to experience acupuncture firsthand. Many people walked the halls of the capitol building, talking with assembly members and state senators in an effort to inform and educate our public representatives.

The day was capped by a special reception in the downstairs rotunda hosted by Neal Miller. Both [Sen. Lou Correa](#) (D-Santa Ana) and former lobbyist Art Krause offered inspiring speeches that reiterated the fact that now is the time for this profession to be taking its place in national health care. Everyone then adjourned to attend a delicious dinner where Dr. Chor enlightened the professionals about their growing role in global health care.

Speaking of moving forward, a [special election](#) will be held in California on May 19. One of the elections will be to fill a vacant congressional seat left by Congresswoman Hilda Solis, who was appointed to be the [Secretary of Labor](#) in the President's cabinet. Solis is a staunch advocate of acupuncture and Oriental medicine. There are currently [12 candidates](#) vying for her seat.

Students have been working on some of these campaigns as representatives and advocates of the acupuncture profession. They have made phone calls to remind voters to get to the polls on

Election Day. Students placed more than 750 phone calls and sent out more than 1,000 letters to voters. This allowed them to get involved and show that acupuncture is on the move politically. We told the candidates' offices that we wanted their candidate to sign onto the acupuncture Medicare bill, HR 646, when they arrive in Washington. Not only was it an excellent learning experience, it was fun to meet new people. Furthermore, the new AAAOM lobbyist in Washington, D.C., Sam Brunelli, will be able to meet with the newly-elected representative to talk about the importance of this medicine being included in Medicare and national health care because of the groundwork done in our home districts. As volunteers in political campaigns, we made an impression on the candidates that the acupuncture profession is interested in protecting the rights of patients and choose this medicine as a treatment modality.

Yes, the profession is on the move, and the AAAOM conference spearheaded this effort. As the old saying goes: "The train has left the station." We are all on board. Let's keep it moving by giving of our money, time, and ideas. This medicine is here to stay, and let's tell everyone.

JULY 2009