

Fighting For Acupuncture As An Essential Health Benefit: A Chat with Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA)

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Two years ago when the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) was signed into law on March 23, 2010, a group of acupuncturists decided to get active to ensure acupuncture would make it into the "essential health benefit" package to be determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS).

During the past year, the American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AAAOM) and many of its national and state partners were actively engaged in the public debate on the definition of Essential Health Benefits (EHB). The AAAOM EHB Task Force had submitted a Summary Report to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) in support of acupuncture as a potentially-covered EHB. In that report, the group outlined both the criteria HHS should use to determine specifics of the EHB package and the benefits of including acupuncture in this benefit package.

The core of the message was that acupuncture increases patient choice and improves overall cost-effectiveness of American healthcare through prevention and its integration with mainstream medicine.

The AAAOM EHB Task Force also worked with the office of Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-CA) to designate acupuncture as a covered as an essential health benefit under PPACA. After running a national letter-writing campaign, the group was able to gather 23,000 letters, which were sent to HHS to comment on the first EHB bulletin.

Chu, an avid supporter of Traditional Chinese Medicine recently sat down for an interview with former AAAOM president Jeannie Kang to talk about the process of moving this issue forward as well as what acupuncturists can expect from their government in the months to come.

Part 1:

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Part 2:

<iframe width="560" height="315" src="http://www.youtube.com/embed/sHulBtL7RLE?rel=0&frameborder="0" allowfullscreen></iframe>

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