

A New Year Brings New Opportunities

Marilyn Allen, Editor at Large

We can all agree that 2012 was a good year. I want to personally thank each and every one who has contributed both small and large amounts to the fund raising effort for the World Health Organization. We were able to contribute, through the Consortium for Oriental Medicine Research and Education Foundation approximately \$200,000 toward the International Classification of Traditional Medicine diagnostic codes to be included in the ICD-11 code sets. These codes are being built into the database at Stanford University.

This effort has spanned the profession from individual contributions to schools and organizations. Thank you all. We just have \$100,000 more to complete our efforts for this project.

This new year brings a number of more challenges to take on for our profession.

One is that we will be working in conjunction with the National Certification Commission of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in getting the job-task analysis surveys completed and returned. This is a large project and is going to require everyone's effort.

When the results from these surveys have been compiled and tabulated the information will be submitted to the Bureau of Labor and Statistics in Washington D.C.. This will complete the application process that was started in 2007 for this profession to be identified as an emerging, free standing identifiable profession in the United States. This accomplishment will help in the credibility of this medicine with the United States.

This project will require the help of every practitioner, in the profession, because the Bureau of Labor and Statistics wants between an 80 to 90 percent return from the survey. They want to hear and have input from the profession. Can the profession and NCCAOM count on you?

With the new Affordable Care Act going forward each state has to designate the medical services that will be selected and covered under the plan. The services are called Essential Health Benefits (EHB). *Acupuncture Today* has been closely monitoring the progress of EHB and acupuncture throughout the past year.

The states of California and Colorado are two states who have already named the services to be covered and acupuncture services were included in the states' plans as of this year. This presents both positive and negative aspects.

The positive aspect is that many more potential patients will have benefits to help them pay for treatments. Another positive is that acupuncture practitioners will be included in the decision making process as to the best treatment plan for patients.

Eastern and Western practitioners sharing in the decision making process of how to best treat a patient will be a plus to both the patients and the treating providers. A downside may be the reimbursement amount.

The Academic Consortium for Complementary and Alternative Health Care (ACCAHC) just co-sponsored a conference in Washington D.C. to promote inter-professional education. This conference was held at Georgetown University and was attended by educators from around the world. The sessions included research posters, sessions on communication, collaboration, coordination and partnership among medical providers.

There are many challenges to face, but the future certainly looks bright.

As we embark into 2013, the opportunities are vast. This looks like it will turn out to be another great year for this profession. This is the time to get involved. Here are a few ways you can do that:

- Join your state and national associations
- Reach out to others in your profession
- Become part of your community.
- Meet your elected officials, both state and federal.

Get acquainted and become a resource for Traditional Chinese Medicine. This is the year. Let's make great strides for the profession and the millions of patients that will receive the healing benefit of acupuncture services.

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