

Acupuncture One Step Closer to Medicare Inclusion

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The new year has proven to be a promising one for acupuncturists nationwide. On the start of the Chinese New Year, the White House petition to recognize acupuncture as a profession and have it included in the Medicare system met the White House standard of having more than 25,000 signatures in order to mandate a formal response by the White House. As of press time, the petition had a total of 27,347 signatures.

The petition was created on Jan. 11 and has gained fast momentum in the last few weeks with thousands of acupuncturists nationwide logging on to sign the petition.

In an effort to make a case, the petition notes studies have shown that when an acupuncturist is directly involved in patient care for pain management and other issues, the patient recovers quicker with less medication required.

The petition also noted that many professions such as dieticians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurse midwives and clinical social workers are already recognized in the Social Security Act and are therefore included in the Medicare system.

The petition was widely supported by many acupuncture organizations nationwide, including the NCCAOM, the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine and the AAAOM, American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.

At this time, as a formal response is pending from the White House many states such as California, Maryland, New Mexico and Washington have already made major strides by including acupuncture for treating pain, nausea and other ailments in their state essential health benefit packages. Acupuncture is also likely to be an essential benefit in Alaska and Nevada, according to the Department of Health and Human Services.

Now, acupuncturists nationwide await a response to have acupuncture finds its place in the mainstream Medicare system.

Read more about this petition and its potential impact on the acupuncture profession in the next issue of *Acupuncture Today*.

To view the petition, go to

<https://petitions.whitehouse.gov/petition/recognize-acupuncturist-healthcare-providers/NTNpVFnp>.

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