

Partnerships Leverage Power for Our Profession

AAAOM Staff

While there are many recognized benefits and advantages to developing partnerships between organizations, the main reason why partnerships are established is relatively simple: There is added value in working together for a common cause or purpose.

A working definition of a partnership is "a collaborative relationship between entities to work toward shared objectives through a mutually agreed division of labor." Establishing such partnerships takes time so the right framework and structure is created and allows the partnerships to have a basis for measuring its benefits to all involved.

Two important partnerships that the AAAOM is currently involved with benefit AOM practitioners and their patients because of their scope and influence on federal and state legislators as well as the general public:

1. The Integrative Healthcare Policy Consortium (IHPC) is a broad coalition of healthcare professionals, patients, and organizations driving public policy to ensure all Americans have access to safe, high quality, integrated health care as well as the basic building blocks of health—whole foods, and clean air, and water.

IHPC's prior executive director was appointed by President Obama to serve on the National Advisory Group on Prevention, Health Promotion, and Integrative and Public Health. This gives our partnership team unprecedented access to key influencers in the Obama administration. Both the AAAOM and IHPC actively participate in decision-making and communications such that critical information is shared and used, resulting in mutual success for each group.

2. The Coalition for Patient Rights consists of more than 35 organizations representing a variety of licensed health care professionals. They, too, seek to counter efforts designed to limit patients' choice of health practitioners.

Each organization the AAAOM is partnered with brings unique assets that ensures we remain viable and valuable to our members. These common values and interests make partnerships with these organizations vital to our mission as they seek to promote qualified, educated practitioners and so that patients have safe, effective healthcare options.

We all know that health care continues to expand and get more complicated every day. To protect the interests of our patients and our practitioners, associations must work together to counter other, more well-funded medical lobbying groups who may not always see the bigger picture. By leveraging these relationships, we optimize our efforts, take advantage of other organizations' strengths, and work toward goals we have long wanted to accomplish.

This column will help keep you updated and informed about the newest developments at the American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. The AAAOM was formed in 1981 to be the unifying force for American acupuncturists committed to high ethical and educational

standards, and a well-regulated profession to ensure the safety of the public. For more information about the AAAOM, please visit www.aaaomonline.org.

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