

## NCCAOM Hosts Ethics Symposium

Kathryn Feather

Healthcare ethical violations can result in increased costs, as well as patient mistrust. Ethical education and training are often the first line of defense. This was the motivation behind the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM)'s recent Ethics and Safety Symposium.

According to the NCCAOM, the Professional Ethics and Disciplinary Committee under the leadership of Michael Taromina, the Chair of the PEDC, revised the NCCAOM Code of Ethics and accompany documents by looking at current healthcare practice trends, as well as best practices and feedback from diplomates through a stakeholder input process. After this process was completed in the fall of 2015, NCCAOM wanted to unveil the revised Code of Ethics by launching the first Ethics and Safety Symposium in January 2016. This was an opportunity for the NCCAOM to offer this workshop to alert diplomates and AOM students on the important subject of ethical compliance and safety. The NCCAOM also announced that all diplomates must complete two hours of safety and two hours of ethics as a part of their recertification requirements. This course met these requirements.

During the past few years, the American healthcare landscape has changed dramatically with patients tapping into the vast amount of healthcare information on the Internet, new technologies, the signing into law of the Affordable Care Act, and new research and development discoveries. The revised code ensures that nationally certified acupuncturists and Oriental medicine (AOM) practitioners are following the highest standards of ethics and patient safety.

According the NCCAOM, the emerging trends, challenges and opportunities in healthcare are related to the growth of acupuncture and integrative medicine in the U.S. They believe the AOM profession however, is not growing as steadily as the consumer use of the medicine. This is due to the fact that many have experienced the benefit of this medicine, and other less qualified practitioners such as PTs and chiropractors are adding acupuncture services without meeting NCCAOM requirements. This has been a major issue in the AOM profession and as a result, the NCCAOM held a panel of leaders to discuss the future of AOM and the evolving American healthcare landscape. The panel was titled, "Emerging Opportunities: How NCCAOM is Helping the Profession Benefit From the Growing Appreciation of AOM Medicine". Questions were addressed and answered about a variety of issues to include increased NCCAOM services for diplomates such as public education campaign to promote diplomates. The NCCAOM views these changes as an opportunity to guide patients seeking an acupuncture and Oriental medicine practitioner to be able to go onto NCCAOM's website and find a nationally certified practitioner who is following the highest standards of ethics and patient safety. Every NCCAOM diplomate must follow the newly revised code of ethics.

Based on the interest of this first NCCAOM Code of Ethics and Safety Symposium and NCCAOM Panel in Orlando, the NCCAOM is considering holding this event for NCCAOM diplomates and students at other cities throughout the country, to enable practitioners to meet with NCCAOM staff and also network with their peers while obtaining essential professional development activity

points and also hear about important initiative's and updates from NCCAOM leadership. This course will also be offered online through the NCCAOM PDA Program.

The NCCAOM, "believe we are positioned to be the 'go-to' resource for how to integrate acupuncture and Oriental medicine into mainstream healthcare. The newly revised Code of Ethics emphasizes our stringent standards and our strong record of safety and ethical compliance. In addition, many of our Diplomates are on the front lines today integrating acupuncture and Oriental medicine into mainstream medicine with excellent patient outcomes."

For more information about the ethics symposium or the newly revised code of ethics, visit [www.nccaom.org](http://www.nccaom.org).

MARCH 2016