

2017: A Great Year for Acupuncture

Marilyn Allen, Editor at Large

As another year comes to a close, and we are winding down and moving into the winter season, I want to say thank you for reading *Acupuncture Today*. I hope it was helpful to you, and that it brought information and inspiration into your life.

Also, I want to thank all of our advertisers for being faithful and supporting us this year. A big thanks goes to the new contributors who submitted information and articles, and to Michelle Medaris — who stepped in this year as the new editor — I think she's done a great job assembling and putting the publication together.

In the Coming Year

This past year there have been many activities and many people involved in helping this medicine take its rightful place within the U.S. health care system. As we look forward to 2018 we see that there are many projects on the horizon, and many ways that the medicine of acupuncture and TCM are moving forward. We see acupuncture and TCM being integrated into the health care system — a great stride for the presence of TCM.

We should also consider the future of acupuncture, and be very careful as to who is going to deliver this medicine. Is enough education required? Are they being required to be nationally certified, and are they licensed. It should be the responsibility of the acupuncture profession to help to guide and draft the guidelines coming forth.

There were numerous seminars held across the U.S. that helped people get reconnected with one another — which led to conversations and the development of new ideas. One seminar in particular was held in Washington D.C. and lead by Hai He Tian. Shortly after the close of the seminar there was an idea to create an English discussion group on WeChat. This has since expanded and is very popular on the internet — people are generating ideas, looking at how to solve problems, and keeping the profession abreast, as there are many things that are happening within the U.S. Congress (current legislation is being discussed).

Organizations Working to Achieve a Common Goal

Acupuncture Without Borders (AWB) has been preparing volunteers — many have already gone to help in Florida, Texas and Puerto Rico. Diana Fried, founder and president, has been doing an outstanding job of recruiting acupuncturists to work in areas where disasters have taken place.

The World Health Organization (WHO) met in Mexico City to continue the development and refinement of the TCIM diagnostic codes. And a group has been formed to work on field trials in U.S. hospitals. There will be a final vote in the early part of 2018 to have them included in the new ICD 11 codes.

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) has said that the number one treatment for pain is

acupuncture. The Joint Commission, the group that accredits hospitals, has recommended and is now requiring that there be other treatments in hospitals for the opioid epidemic, other than just pharmaceuticals. There are so many outside forces that seem to be pushing acupuncture into the U.S. health care system.

Our world is changing, our society is making changes. More people seem to be suffering this year, therefore, let's make it our priority that we will see more people and tell more people about this medicine. Explain how we can help their quality of life, and move them into wellness and prevention. The math is simple — prevent an illness, rather than fixing our bodies when they break. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the tremendous progress of our profession in 2017.

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