



MEDICARE 101

Concerns About Medicare Inclusion

Dear Editor:

Some people think any bill is better than nothing. Details are crucial. No one has mentioned some of the most important considerations of the new Medicare acupuncture bill.

First, can an acupuncturist treat a covered person out of network or must we refuse them service? I ask this because many acupuncturists have cash practices and may not want to bill the insurer. This may also be a slippery slope that takes away our autonomy.

Second, what happens to the other therapies we use? Most practice more than acupuncture, and this combination of services may be what brings the greatest benefit. We do much more than insert needles.

Third, what about our fees for services? The chiropractic profession has been recognized by Medicare for decades, and yet Medicare does not pay for mandatory exams, therapies or X-rays. (Medicare will cover the cost of an X-ray when ordered by an MD, though.)



Is it worth our ability to sell our profession when we do not get salaried government employment? In other words, why are we so willing to sacrifice our future for these limitations when we do not need to?

Anonymity Requested

Editor's Note: What are your thoughts about acupuncturists being recognized by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS)? With H.R. 4803, the Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act of 2021, recently introduced in the House of Representatives, we understand you may have unanswered questions or concerns – and/or would like to offer your support for the legislation. We encourage you to submit your comments to editorial@acupuncturetoday.com for potential publication in a future issue. The NCCAOM / ASA may address your comments in a future article as well, since they plan on updating the profession regularly. Note that unless you provide your full name, degree(s), and the city and state in which you practice, your comments will be published just like this one was: anonymously. For background on the Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act, please read our [feature article](#) by the ASA / NCCAOM leadership teams in the October issue, which discusses why the legislation is important to the future of individual acupuncturists and the profession overall.

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