



MEDICARE LEGISLATION

Strategic Advocacy: Promoting H.R. 4803 This Year (and Next)

HOW YOU CAN HELP ADVANCE THE ACUPUNCTURE FOR OUR SENIORS ACT.

ASA and NCCAOM Advocacy Team

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- The ASA and the NCCAOM will call upon the profession to help advance the Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act by contacting congressional offices as appropriate throughout 2023 and 2024.
- The ASA / NCCAOM are supporting a bill that solely seeks Medicare recognition. This approach presents a higher likelihood of advancing through Congress, as it addresses a specific policy misalignment.
- To stay updated on advocacy efforts and opportunities to get involved, text *Advocate!* to 52886 so you are among the first to receive bill updates and opportunities to help the ASA and the NCCAOM advocate for the acupuncture profession.

Adjournment of the 117th Congress (2021-2022) in December 2022 reset all bills pending congressional action, including H.R. 4803, the Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act. This routine adjournment clears the slate in preparation for the next Congress, which begins early the following January.

Since only a fraction of bills introduced in any given Congress become law, congressional representatives routinely reintroduce many bills at the start of a new session. The Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act (H.R. 4803) is one such bill.

Preparations for reintroducing a bill often begin in the previous Congress, so preparations to ready the Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act for the 118th Congress started well before it convened on Jan.

3, 2023.

While many components of a bill's development are technical, the process still provides opportunities for advocates to contribute. Strategic actions that acupuncturists take now will help mobilize effective grassroots advocacy efforts throughout the 118th Congress.

Be Patient, But Get Ready

The ASA and the NCCAOM will call upon the profession to help advance the Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act by contacting congressional offices as appropriate throughout 2023 and 2024. A measured approach to contacting members of Congress is critical. Following the ASA and the NCCAOM's direction will ensure advocates contact the right congressional representatives at the right time.

Meanwhile, the ASA and the NCCAOM offer a wealth of background information to help raise awareness of the Medicare recognition effort, as well as provide best-practice guidance to effectively advocate for this effort. These resources, available on the ASA and [NCCAOM](#) advocacy webpages, can help bring individuals up to speed on the federal effort to obtain Medicare recognition, as well as different ways individuals can get involved with the federal effort.

A good place to start, however, is by listening to the ASA's 2023 [State of the Profession](#), which provides an overview of the profession and an update on the ASA and the NCCAOM's effort to advance the Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act in the 118th Congress.

ASA / NCCAOM Federal Efforts: Understanding the Strategy

In most cases, small and focused bills are more successful than large, broad bills. Citing Medicare's 2020 coverage policy for chronic lower back pain (cLBP) and congressional cost sensitivities, the ASA and the NCCAOM worked with Representative Judy Chu (D-Calif.) in 2021 to introduce a bill that focused specifically on obtaining Medicare provider status for acupuncturists. This effort resulted in a narrow and straightforward bill that could better navigate congressional cost parameters.

A bill's cost is often a deciding factor for congressional support, which is why it is critical that the federal effort addresses Medicare provider status and nothing else at this time. Seeking Medicare coverage for additional acupuncture services, or addressing billing, coding and reimbursement, fall outside the purview of the federal effort. Similarly, scope-of-practice and licensure matters remain state issues and are not germane to federal policymaking.

The ASA and the NCCAOM are again taking this strategy in the 118th Congress to support a bill that solely seeks Medicare recognition. This narrow approach presents a higher likelihood of advancing through Congress, as it addresses a specific policy misalignment: Medicare covers acupuncture for cLBP, but needs congressional authorization to allow acupuncturists to provide the service.

The Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act would provide this authorization and enable acupuncturists to directly treat Medicare beneficiaries for cLBP.

How You Can Help

Follow the ASA / NCCAOM Advocacy Strategy and Share It With Colleagues. The ASA and the NCCAOM need the profession's help to unite behind one focused strategy for obtaining Medicare recognition. A component of effective advocacy is understanding the importance of timing and

balance. While numbers matter, the quality of co-sponsors is often more valuable than the quantity, especially as a bill first gains traction.

The ASA and the NCCAOM will continue to be strategic in seeking Democratic and Republican co-sponsors to ensure the bill remains attractive to both parties and steadily grows in co-sponsors.

Stay Updated on the ASA / NCCAOM Advocacy Efforts. To stay updated on advocacy efforts and opportunities to get involved, text *Advocate!* to 52886 so you are among the first to receive bill updates and opportunities to help the ASA and the NCCAOM advocate for the profession.

Many Voices, One Message

Effective advocacy consists of many voices united behind one message. The ASA and the NCCAOM work hard to ensure that message represents the profession, as well as demonstrate acupuncturists' value and their contributions to health and wellness.

Look for more information from the ASA and the NCCAOM on the Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act and ways you can contribute to protecting the future of the profession.

Editor's Note: Due to press timing, this legislation may have been reintroduced by the time you read this article. If so, you likely would have received a breaking news email linking to the article on AcupunctureToday.com.

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