

## **Oriental Medicine 2001: Scope of Practice**

A PRACTITIONER-FRIENDLY CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE

**Editorial Staff** 

This September, 50 exhibitors will join 500 practitioners and students of Oriental medicine at the Rhode Island Convention Center in Providence for the Oriental Medicine 2001 "Scope of Practice" Conference and Expo. What has become known as "the big East Coast conference" is actually the result of a three-year quest to create a practitioner-friendly conference model.

The Oriental Medicine series of conferences was created in 1999 by Christopher Swain of the Acupuncture Resource Directory and Bill Egloff of The Crane Herb Company. "We set out to create the best and most affordable conference in North America," said Swain, "and through a combination of corporate sponsorships and careful pricing, we made it happen."

This year's OM 2001 sponsors include American Specialty Health Networks; the Acupuncture Resource Directory; Crane Herbs; Honso USA Japanese Herbal Medicine; the TCM World Foundation, and the New England School of Acupuncture, Department of Continuing Education.

When Swain and Egloff first started the Oriental Medicine conferences, they were looking for a way to deliver top-drawer, low-cost continuing education to east coast practitioners in search of continuing education units. They also wanted to make a multi-day conference experience available to students. By offering inexpensive pricing packages, they managed to attract over 425 attendees -- nearly 200 of them students -- to their first effort, Oriental Medicine 2000, "Integrity and Integration," which was also held in Providence last year.

Swain and Egloff want to do more than create low-priced conferences, however. They hope to bring an unprecedented level of diversity to the classes they offer. Using a combination of panel discussions, breakout sessions and day-long classes, OM 2000 covered everything from the Daoist geomancy, palmistry and physiognomy, to cosmetic acupuncture and cooking with Chinese herbs. At OM 2001, attendees will have to choose between classes with topics such as "Treating Betrayal of Intimacy with Chinese Medicine," "Prayer in the Clinical Setting" and "The Most Important Herbal Formulas for Treating Mental-Emotional Disorders."

All of this content is delivered by some of the best teaching talent available. The OM 2000 conference featured Ted Kaptchuk, Richard Hammerschlag and Alex Tiberi. The instructors for this year's conference include Jeffrey Yuen, Bob Flaws, David Euler, Lonny Jarrett and Sharon Weizenbaum.

By all accounts, the model devised by Swain and Egloff's is a success. Last year, one student wrote in their evaluation, "Oriental Medicine 2000 was cheaper and more informative than some of my textbooks!" Swain's favorite evaluation, though, came from a practitioner who wrote, "There were so many excellent classes, it was hard to decide which ones to take. It was definitely worth the money."

Egloff and Swain hope to attract another group of attendees to their conference as well: practitioners

who have never been to a multi-day conference. "We are a friendly place for practitioners to have their first conference experience," Swain said. By holding the conference in a convention center, they are able to deliver a higher level of service and a nicer facility than attendees can find at other North American Oriental Medicine conferences. According to Swain, this lays the foundation for a great first conference experience. To reach these "first-timers," a comprehensive marketing strategy has been employed, using a combination of bulk mailings, ads in trade publications, and special offers in schools to reach potential attendees who might not otherwise attend a multi-day conference.

Many of these marketing efforts are coordinated by Bill Egloff, one of the conference's sponsors. One of the ways he supports the conference is by posting the OM 2001 brochure and registration materials online at [url=http://www.craneherb.com]http://www.craneherb.com[/url]. The site allows practitioners to browse through the conference offerings at their leisure and it reduces printing and mailing costs, all of which adds up to lower prices for attendees. "I want to see the conferences succeed, and I'll do whatever I can to help," Egloff said. "We are constantly looking for ways to help practitioners succeed. Sponsoring these conferences is a very satisfying way to support that goal."

*Editor's note*: The Oriental Medicine 2001 "Scope of Practice" Conference & Expo will take place September 13-16. Practitioners and students interested in attending the conference can get more information by browsing the conference offerings at www.craneherb.com; by viewing the calendar listings in *Acupuncture Today*; or by calling Four Gates Communications toll-free at 1-888-798-0630. SEPTEMBER 2001

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