

Arizona, Idaho Considering New Acupuncture Legislation

Editorial Staff

As the Oriental medicine profession continues to make legislative headway, states that have existing acupuncture laws are continually refining them to ensure acupuncture is performed only by competent, licensed health care providers. Two examples of the revising of current acupuncture laws are taking place in Idaho and Arizona, where lawmakers have drafted bills that impose tougher standards for non-acupuncturists. While neither bill holds these providers to the same educational rigors as licensed acupuncturists, the revision of current laws shows that legislators have come to recognize that acupuncture is a complex system of healing requiring considerable instruction and experience, and are taking the necessary steps to make sure patients are receiving quality care from trained health care professionals.

Idaho Law Creates New Requirements for Non-Acupuncturists

Idaho is one of the few states in the country that uses different titles depending on the person providing treatment. The "licensed acupuncturist" designation is used, naturally, for licensed acupuncturists, while medical doctors and osteopaths may use "certified acupuncturist."

Current Idaho law requires that in order to be certified, an applicant must meet the requirements for full or associate membership in the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture (AAMA - limited to medical doctors or osteopaths) or fellowship in the International Academy of Medical Acupuncture (IAMA). House Bill 14, which was introduced in January, removes any references to the IAMA, establishes education and experience requirements for non-acupuncturists, and opens up the practice of acupuncture to several types of health care providers.

One new amendment inserted into HB 14 requires that an applicant for certification must be a currently licensed health care practitioner. In addition to successful passage of an acupuncture exam or demonstration of competency in acupuncture, a person applying for certification must demonstrate that he or she has either completed the requirements for full AAMA membership, or "possesses a doctor of chiropractic, doctor of dentistry, doctor of podiatric medicine or naturopathic doctor degree from an accredited college or university, or is a registered nurse practitioner."

HB 14 also establishes educational levels for non-acupuncturists. All applicants must have successfully completed "a minimum of one hundred (100) hours of didactic coursework, two hundred (200) hours of practice as a certified technician over a one (1) year period and twenty-five (25) case studies," along with "a blood borne pathogen course and comprehensive examination that incorporates clean needle techniques and OSHA procedures and requirements" as part of the requirements for certification.

After being introduced in the House, HB 14 was sent to the House Health and Welfare Committee for

review. Users can learn more about the status of the legislation at www3.state.id.us/legislat/legtrack.html.

Arizona Law Toughens Standards for Chiropractors to Practice Acupuncture

A separate law being proposed in Arizona will make it more difficult for chiropractors to become certified to perform acupuncture. If passed, Senate Bill 1052 would more than double the minimum required number of study hours, and would make chiropractors prove they have passed an acupuncture examination before being allowed to practice.

Previously, Arizona law stated that in order for a doctor of chiropractic to perform acupuncture, an applicant would have to show completion of only 50 hours of study at an accredited chiropractic college or postgraduate study with an instructor at an accredited school. The law did not, however, specify what subject the applicant had to study, nor did it require chiropractors to show proof that they had passed an acupuncture exam.

Senate Bill 1052 corrects these inconsistencies in the law by requiring DCs to show they have successfully completed a minimum of 120 hours of study in acupuncture at an accredited college. The bill also forces DCs to provide documentation of having passed an acupuncture examination approved by the state's board of chiropractic examiners.

SB 1052 passed the Arizona Senate 29-1 on February 6 and is currently being reviewed in the House. For an update on its status, visit www.azleg.state.az.us and enter the bill number in the "Search" field.

If you know of an important acupuncture law that has been introduced or is about to be passed, please contact *Acupuncture Today* at 714-230-3181, or by e-mail: editorial@acupuncturetoday.com.

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