

Celebrating AOM Day 2005

DOZENS OF FESTIVITIES PLANNED FOR OCTOBER 24

Editorial Staff

On Oct. 24, 2002, acupuncturists, patients and other advocates of Oriental medicine across the country celebrated the first-ever occasion of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day. The brainchild of a group of acupuncture and Oriental medicine organizations from the U.S., Canada and Mexico, the original purpose of AOM Day was to serve as part of a nationwide campaign to educate the public about the benefits of acupuncture and other forms of Asian healing

Since that first celebration, the public's interest in acupuncture and Oriental medicine has increased, and the number of practitioners recognizing AOM Day has grown significantly with each passing year. Nor has the importance of acupuncture and Oriental medicine been lost on the nation's elected officials. Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin, a vocal proponent of complementary forms of healing, was one of the first legislators to sign a proclamation in support of AOM Day in 2002. Over time, similar proclamations have been signed by the governors of Hawaii, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Wisconsin; the mayors of more than two dozen cities (including Boston, Mass., Austin, Texas, and Santa Cruz, Calif.); and the Tennessee legislature, which passed a bill officially recognizing AOM Day by a combined vote of 127-0 in May.

As the fourth anniversary of AOM Day draws near, this year's celebration is expected to be the largest ever, with hundreds of acupuncturists and dozens of colleges participating in the event. To that extent, *Acupuncture Today* has contacted several of the leading national acupuncture and Oriental medicine associations to comment on the importance of AOM Day and their plans for increasing public awareness about the profession. Their responses are printed below, and are listed in the order in which they were received.

Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

The Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine has been an active sponsor of, and participant in, North American AOM Day since this commemoration began on Oct. 24, 2002. The Council is pleased to have an annual opportunity not only to celebrate its support for the profession of acupuncture and Oriental medicine on this day, but also to join with other AOM organizations throughout the country to share in a mutual commitment toward the advancement of the AOM field. As is true for any profession, it is particularly beneficial periodically to step back from the many (and sometimes controversial) issues of the day and simply take a breath of collective recognition for a field that continues to engage our personal and professional passion, and to provide a source of healing for many.

In commemoration of this special day, the Council's member colleges engage in a number of activities on Oct. 24 to promote greater public awareness of the benefits of AOM. These activities include issuing local press releases, announcing the day in college newsletters, offering free acupuncture

treatments at college clinics, providing free talks about AOM, holding health fairs, conducting open-house tours of college clinics and facilities, encouraging alumni to hold an evening of free treatments or talks at their clinics, and working with local AOM professionals in commemorating the day.

American Organization for Bodywork Therapies of Asia™

AOBTA® members and the board of directors acknowledge the importance of having an "official day" for our professions. We see it as a time for all who practice the many facets of our fine traditions to come together and celebrate the contributions that we can and do make in the world, and to educate others about Asian Bodywork Therapy (ABT), AOBTA instructors, and other professional members.

AOBTA has promoted and supported AOM Day since its inception. We primarily do that by regularly reminding and encouraging our members and schools to participate; through our Web site; in our monthly e-mail updates; and in our quarterly *PULSE News*. We ask them to inform us of their participation so we can list their contributions. We are also happy participate in NCCAOM's publicity campaign.

Society for Acupuncture Research

The Society for Acupuncture Research (SAR) is pleased to pledge its support for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day. Our mission, in keeping with the goals of this event, is to help develop and disseminate an "evidence base" for acupuncture, herbal therapy and other modalities of AOM. We believe that research, if it is rigorous as well as consistent with the principles and practice of this traditional medicine, can enhance the credibility of AOM in the eyes of health care consumers and health care providers.

SAR will continue its close collaborations with other AOM national and state organizations to provide research information for AOM practitioners and patients. In this manner, as well as by hosting an annual research conference, SAR seeks to further the entry of AOM into the mainstream of contemporary health care.

National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

NCCAOM is very excited about AOM Day this year. To start, we have contracted with a media company to do a satellite media tour airing on commercial television during the morning and afternoon news. This media tour will allow us to reach a wide range of consumers who do not know very much about our profession and the quality practitioners who help their patients every day. Next, we are updating and adding more information to the AOM Day Web site (www.aomday.org). We hope that everyone will visit the site and tell us what they are planning and how they will celebrate. Most importantly, we are reaching out and working with the other professional organizations to find ways to make this day, and others, better for practitioners and patients.

Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Alliance

The AOM Alliance is excited about its plans for AOM Day 2005. As in years past, the focus is on a myriad of activities across the country and internationally. The AOM Alliance is teaming up with a number of partners this year, including NADA, NCCAOM, AAOM, ACAOM, and the AOBTA. We are also working hard to develop international celebrations through our relationship with members of the North American Council on Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NACAOM), focusing on Canada and

Mexico, along with various organizations around the world.

The AOM Alliance will be sponsoring and encouraging a wide variety of activity. For creative ideas and suggestions, follow the AOM Day link on the AOM Alliance Web site at www.aomalliance.org. We are also trying to build a sense of global community by linking the celebrations in different venues through an e-mail list and on the Web site. We encourage everyone to register their plans with the AOM Alliance by calling (253) 851-6896 or e-mailing us at info@aomalliance.org

American Association of Oriental Medicine

The AAOM is planning many of its own activities as well as working in collaboration with the NCCAOM and other national organizations in celebrating AOM Day this October. Specifically, AAOM's annual event is always scheduled the third week of October, with one of its primary purposes to celebrate AOM Day through the combined participation and achievements of the profession.

We see the purposes of AOM Day as three-fold:

- to educate the public;
- to educate legislators; and
- to inform practitioners about the issues that impact them at the state and national level.

In order to move forward as a profession, each of these areas must be fully addressed separately, and as an integrative whole:

- The public must be continually educated on the advancement of Oriental medicine via research, education, legislative awareness, or our own clinical success stories.
- The profession must work to get new licensing laws to expand scope of practice in individual states, while at the same time protecting our scope of practice, as well as our rights to herbal access. As an example, this year, AAOM will honor at its annual awards banquet, a practitioner who was able to assure the enactment of scope of practice legislation in South Carolina following the governor's veto of the legislation.
- Individual practitioners need to be more aware of the social and political influences that impact their profession and how to work with, instead of against, these market forces.

Although AOM Day is a one-day national event, the efforts toward meeting the public purpose behind this celebration is a day-in, day-out endeavor. To that extent, AAOM's support of AOM Day becomes our public "report card" to demonstrate the year-long activities that have occurred on all fronts. At this year's conference, this collaborative AOM Day celebration of Oriental medicine's advancement across the span of 2004-2005 will be featured in AAOM's general session kickoff on Friday, Oct. 21; again in our annual President's Roundtable meeting on Friday evening; and culminating in a public outreach forum, with the press invited, on Sunday, Oct. 23. For more information, please visit the AAOM Web site at www.aaom.org.

Celebrating AOM Day? Let Us Know!

If you, your school, or your association plan on celebrating AOM Day, and you would like more people to know about it, please submit an e-mail to editorial@acupuncturetoday.com titled "AOM Day 2005." We will include your information on a special "Celebrate AOM Day" page to be posted on AcupunctureToday.com beginning October 1. The section will be updated continuously throughout October.

Happy AOM Day!

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