

AAOM Challenges 300-Hour "Chiropractic Acupuncture" Program

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Becoming a licensed acupuncturist is a journey, rather than just a trip, particularly in terms of the training required. Students of the 3,000-year-old discipline must complete an average of three to four years of graduate-level training and then pass a nationally certified exam before being allowed to practice. In some states - California for example - students must take a state-level test to be certified within that state, in addition to meeting the educational and national requirements. This arduous process is why many acupuncturists are vehemently questioning the American Chiropractic Association's (ACA) 300-hour acupuncture certification program.

"Chiropractors with substandard training, representing themselves as 'chiropractors certified in acupuncture' mislead the public," read a press release issued by the AAOM on June 21, 2006 and signed by William Morris, AAOM president; Martin Herbkersman, AAOM vice president, state affairs; and Lloyd Wright, AAOM legislative chair.¹ "Legislative efforts underway in many states across the nation advocate expanding chiropractors' scope at educational standards that fall 85% to 90% below the educational requirements of our professions."

"[The] 300 hours are didactic class hours," commented Dr. Richard Yennie, DC, Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM), president of the ACA CAA. "For every classroom hour, the student must study two hours in order to pass the final examination. Therefore, many more hours in addition to the classroom are required."

The ACA College of Chiropractic Acupuncture (ACA CCA) was created on Oct. 16, 2002, at a meeting held at Cleveland College of Chiropractic - Kansas City. The ACA CCA's stated purpose was to unify the professions, homogenize acupuncture instruction, decide on a board that would write and administer the exams, and grant diplomate status for those doctors who qualify and pass the 300-hour program.² "As a united group, we can defend our right to include acupuncture procedures if challenged. We believe all professions can and should work harmoniously. Our objective and purpose are to work toward that goal," wrote Dr. Yennie in a March 12, 2006 article in *Dynamic Chiropractic*.²

Dr. Yennie, who was invited to speak as an expert witness for the passage of the first acupuncture practice act in the U.S. in 1974, is in a unique position as both a chiropractor and acupuncturist. "Our students are instructed to never present themselves as acupuncturists; they are identified as doctors of chiropractic who are also certified in acupuncture. I feel that 300 hours is sufficient for chiropractic-acupuncture but not for the prestigious title of acupuncturist."

For Dr. Yennie, chiropractors should be equally unconcerned if the proverbial shoe were on the other foot. When asked if he believed acupuncturists should be allowed to perform chiropractic manipulation after a 300-hour program, he answered, "Yes, assuming they already completed the basic science

curriculum, and that the course was up to par."

The AAOM has been keeping tabs on state legislation concerning chiropractic acupuncturists, and is ready to defend its position any time similar legislation is introduced. The association's June 2006 press release outlines the risks associated with "expanding chiropractic scope of practice into acupuncture with insufficient training," including nerve paralysis, organ puncture, and overutilizing acupuncture, therefore damaging the reputation of the individual provider and the profession as a whole.¹ "We basically wanted to provide our members with information which they could use to educate legislators in their states about the accepted standards of education for acupuncture and Oriental medicine practice," said Morris in a recent interview.³

The AAOM says it will continue to keep watch on state legislatures and support state acupuncture associations in any way it can. "Through our State Associations, AAOM is committed to monitor and advocate on behalf of the legislative activities of each state, to assure these standards are upheld and the public, your voting constituencies, are informed," concluded the June 21 press release.

References

1. "AAOM Position Paper - Expanding Chiropractic Scope in Acupuncture." AAOM press release, June 21, 2006.
2. "[Coming of Age for the ACA College of Acupuncture](#)." *Dynamic Chiropractic*, March 12, 2006.
3. "AAOM Challenges Chiropractic's Standard on 300 Hour Acupuncture Certification." The Integrator Blog, July 5, 2006.

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