

Pro-Acupuncture Rally to Take Place in Sacramento on August 22

Editorial Staff | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

On August 22, an estimated 500 licensed acupuncturists, acupuncture students, instructors, and other interested parties will gather on the steps of the California state capitol building in Sacramento, to support a series of bills authored by Assemblyman Leland Yee (D-San Francisco). The gathering is designed to increase public awareness of acupuncture, while highlighting the importance of Yee's proposed legislation.

"I am honored that so many acupuncturists and consumer advocates from throughout California will be traveling to Sacramento in support of these important bills," said Yee. "The legislature has overwhelmingly supported our efforts to strengthen the acupuncture profession. It is imperative that the governor hear from patients and the acupuncture community, and that he sign this legislation."

Yee is the author of several bills designed to strengthen the acupuncture profession. Among them is Assembly Bill 1113, which would clarify language related to the ability of acupuncturists to diagnose patients as part of their scope of practice. Existing language does not clearly establish the rights of acupuncturists to use diagnosis in the course of care.

"Although acupuncturists are often the first, and sometimes the only, health provider seen by a patient, acupuncturists are not formally recognized in statute to diagnose," explained Yee. "Because acupuncturists cannot treat without ascertaining a patient's condition, AB 1113 is a logical and necessary revision to present statutory language."

Other bills introduced by Yee in the latest legislative session include:

- * AB 1114, which would increase the required number of continuing education hours for license renewal from 30 hours every to 50 hours every two years;

- * AB 1115, which would formally recognize the position of "acupuncture assistant" as a supporting staff member for licensed acupuncturists. The acupuncture assistant would carry out administrative ancillary duties, but would not be allowed to carry out responsibilities specifically allocated to licensed acupuncturists via licensure and training; and

- * AB 1117, which would change existing terminology in California code from "Oriental" to "Asian."

In addition to Yee's legislation, the group in Sacramento will urge the Legislature and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to support the sunrise of the California Acupuncture Board, which is responsible for protecting and educating the public through its regulation of acupuncture licenses and educational standards.

"Monday's rally is a necessary exercise through which practitioners of acupuncture, members of the educational community, patients and concerned citizens can come together to show their support for Assemblyman Yee's legislation and for the preservation of the California Acupuncture Board," said Michelle Lau, president of the Council of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Associations.

Among those traveling to Sacramento will be group of students from Samra University in Los Angeles. Will Morris, president of the American Association of Oriental Medicine and a dean at Samra, offered his support to the students in a press release.

"In this support campaign for AB 1113, the students are once again leading the grassroots activities to protect the future of this medicine," said Dr. Morris.

For more information on the campaign for AB 1113 and the rally in Sacramento, please call (323) 365-1095, or send an e-mail to pindoc@gmail.com.