



PATIENT EDUCATION

## Helping Spread the Word

Marilyn Allen, Editor at Large

It hardly seems possible that another year has come and gone and the celebration of National Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day on Oct. 24 is just around the corner once again. How and why should this day be celebrated? Each one of us has some great ideas, so share them with others in your area. This special day presents many unique opportunities to share the healing benefits of Oriental medicine. Here are just a few ideas:

*Have a special open house in your office.* Start with a special something for all of your patients. This is a great way to do internal marketing. Give them a handout, a DVD or a “goodie bag.” Make it something that will help increase their understanding of acupuncture and Oriental medicine. Most important, make it something they would be able to share with their family, friends and neighbors. One suggestion might be to include a sample needle for patients to “show and tell,” when the inevitable question arises as to whether or not the needles hurt going in. In this case, a needle really is worth a thousand words.

*Call on your state and federal governmental representatives.* Most of the time, especially with the current economy, they probably only hear from their constituents who have complaints. So brighten their day with some positive information about this great healing medicine. Tell them how fast this medicine is growing in the United States. List some of the benefits, including pain reduction, endorphin release (some researchers believe that endorphins are **10 times stronger** than morphine), inflammation reduction, increase in circulation and reduction of anxiety.

*Notify your former patients.* Use your e-mail list or general mailing list to reconnect with those patients who have dropped off your radar. Just write a short message to remind them about the benefits of a single acupuncture treatment. Let them know you are participating in National Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day and have them forward the message on to at least two friends.

*Send out a press release.* One by one, we can spread the good news about this special day by using powerful outlets such as sending out a press release to the local media. (A press release is a short, precise announcement sent to various media outlets in your community.) Some examples would be local radio and TV stations, newspapers, newsletters and other community publications that tell the public what’s going on in the area and what special events are upcoming.

Where are we going?

As we look at the profession from this time last year until now, we must ask ourselves a number of questions. Have we, as individuals and a profession, introduced Oriental medicine to a wider group of people in the United States between October 2008 and October 2009? Are there more practitioners seeing an increased number of new patients, and if not, why not? Are there fewer sick people in the

United States this year over last year? Are more patients referring their families and friends, and if not, why not? Have we provided proper educational material and information to help our patients refer others to us? Have we educated more people about the healing benefits of acupuncture? Are more acupuncturists staying in practice? Is the profession making strides into the political arena?

This answer to this last question is in the affirmative. The AAAOM is working with a lobbying firm to work on the passage of [HR 646](#), which will include acupuncture in Medicare. Various states are working with their legislators to increase scopes of practice, including herbs, and gain recognition and regulation as a profession.

The answers to all these questions will depend on each individual practitioner in the profession. Everyone is an individual but also has a responsibility to the profession as a whole. Practitioners need to join together in professional organizations, give money to help in fundraising efforts and increase and upgrade professional treating skills, documentation and record-keeping efforts.

Spreading the word about National Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day is a task worthy of the best advocates. Get involved wherever and whenever you can. Show up and speak out. Tell others about healing as one of the wonders of nature. Acupuncture helps to put and restore balance into the body to result in a new level of health.

For more information on National Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day, please visit [www.aomday.org](http://www.aomday.org).

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