



POLITICS / GOVERNMENT / LEGISLATION

AOM On the Campaign Trail

ACUPUNCTURIST RUNNING FOR STATE OFFICE

Tina Beychok

There's no doubt that complementary medicine is a political hot button these days. Should it be included in the new health care bill? Should Medicare patients have access? Will it cut health care costs? With these questions in mind, Pennsylvania acupuncturist David Molony, PhD, LAc, has hit the campaign trail to run for Republican state representative in the [133rd district](#). This district is part of what is known as the "Rust Belt"; a blue-collar, mostly Democratic district that has been hit hard by the closing of the steel mills, including the famous [Bethlehem Steel Corporation](#).

Molony's first hurdle will take place with the [primary election](#) on May 18, followed by the general election on Nov. 2. He will be running against Democratic incumbent [Joseph Brennan](#). Molony took time out of his busy campaigning schedule to chat with *Acupuncture Today* about his political goals.

AT: What made you decide to run for office?

DM: I have been active politically for some time locally, as a civil service commission chairman and with legislative activities statewide and nationally, but the biggest stimulant to my decision is my desire to give back to my state and country in some way for all the advantages we seem to take for granted. I've lived and traveled in many countries and I've not come across any place where it is possible to have the freedoms we have here. With these freedoms comes the responsibility to serve. I was never in the military service, so I chose to do it in this way. I feel extremely lucky to be able to do so. What is funny is that if I read this reply, I would feel it was a bunch of crap from some politician, but I really mean it. I believe that are many people who feel this way and that there are even more who are stepping forward for similar reasons.



AT: Can you summarize the progress the campaign has made these last few months?

DM: I've actually been planning for more than two years to run because it is my impression that this seat in the House of Representatives gives me the best opportunity to meet a large percentage of the people I am hoping to represent. At the last election, I set up a write-in vote the actual day of the election with no prior notice other than a single non-denominational mailing to the people here (the district represents 36,000 voters). I got about 500 write-in votes. Now, in a write-in vote, the voter

actually has to split their ticket and write in the name of a candidate. I was told that to get such a large number of votes in this way shows voter dissatisfaction, especially in a presidential election year.

In the past few months, I have set up [Web site](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) presences, made a public announcement of my candidacy, developed a better understanding of issues that are relevant to my constituents, hired a campaign office manager and a consultant, raised money and have been working to meet the people in my district. On Feb. 23, I started the petition drive where I hope to get over 500 signatures in three weeks. We have set up a volunteer effort to do that.

AT: Obviously, health care is a major issue. Can you outline your campaign platform on health care?

DM: Well, the state level regarding health care is mostly reactive to national developments because the federal level says what we have to do and the state level has to pay for it in a large way. One major question I have is why is no one addressing the issue of health care outside of acute emergency care and heroic actions that our hospital-based system works under? The incredible expense of our present-day system revolves around this antiquated way we manage things. Change has to be more evolutionary than revolutionary. The political pork and games involved in the present legislative actions are enough that I think we will see many states start to invoke the 10th amendment if things continue, due to the sheer thoughtlessness and the costs passed down from the federal government.

AT: What role do you see for acupuncture and other complementary medicines in our health care system?

DM: This again is a national issue, upon which I can have little effect from the seat for which I am running, and Oriental medicine is still in a stage where merely having independent access is a prime goal in many states. That said, it is my impression as a long-term leader in acupuncture and Oriental medicine politics and policies in the United States, that as long as we can retain access to our medicines and our patients, we will continue to grow and gain acceptance. The only other major thing we can do as an independent profession is to be able to participate in these discussions that will decide our fate. To do this, we must come to the table as equals by developing a first professional doctorate degree.

AT: What has been the biggest challenge for your campaign?

DM: I will be vastly outspent by my opponent, who has a 70 percent party voter advantage and whose predecessor is now the chair of the state political committee. Combine that with incumbent advantages like robo-calls and newsletters paid by the taxpayers, and one can see a need for more exposure on my part.

AT: The biggest asset?

DM: My volunteers, my staff, my intentions and industriousness, and the fact that past voting history shows that people in this area of the country vote for the best candidate when given a choice, regardless of party affiliation. I do plan to win and would not waste my time and efforts if that was not the case. I'm not [Don Quixote](#).

AT: What might be your political aspirations, if any, beyond the state level?

DM: None in the slightest. It is not my intention to continue to serve for more than 10 years, if even

that. It is my impression that is the way it was supposed to be when the whole thing of a voluntary legislature started.

AT: In what ways has being an acupuncturist given you a unique view of politics?

DM: An understanding of balance and the ability to remain composed when trying not to get hit by the stuff coming from the fan. My sense of humor will remain undaunted, if slightly subdued. I have also found from my work giving legislators free acupuncture at the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) that legislators are more open when they are not in pain. It is too bad that the AAAOM has decided to discontinue that effort. We were easily the most popular booth at the conference for more than 5 years straight. The naturopaths have not neglected being there. In complementary medicine, they are the ones that now rule the roost due to their profession's doctoral entry level, research programs, political savvy and fundraising ability.

AT: If you are elected, in what ways would you change (or not change) access to health care for Pennsylvanians?

DM: As one of 203 House members, my goal would be to make sure that everyone has access to the health care they choose. I also would like to advocate access to hospitals for acupuncture and Oriental medicine providers here in Pennsylvania. The hospitals could use our capability in easing pain, building strength and enhancing balance in the system.

AT: How can people support your campaign?

DM: My Web site (www.friendofdave.com) has a donation window, and people might get a better view of my campaign there, too. If people want to send a check (no corporate checks is the rule of the day), it can be written to "Friends of Dave Molony" and addressed to Friends of Dave Molony, 301 Front Street, Catasauqua, PA 18032. Any support from my profession will be greatly appreciated and is needed in order for me to succeed. If you cannot afford money, a smile and a prayer would be nice.

AT: Anything else you would like to add?

DM: While my goal is to represent my constituents first and foremost, my training provides me with a unique opportunity for the profession of acupuncture and Oriental medicine in this country. It will show the beginning of a maturation within our profession as we evolve into the mainstream of this great country.

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