



ACUPUNCTURE & ACUPRESSURE

## ASA Ready to Impact Profession

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The American Society of Acupuncturists (ASA) is a 501(c)6 (pending), not-for-profit collaboration among state based, acupuncturist professional associations. The governance of the ASA involves a Board of Directors that sets strategy to policy developed by the Council of State Associations (CSA), which is now housed within the ASA. At the time of this official launch, we have 24 dues-paying state association members representing more than 3000 acupuncturist professionals.

If you are a member of your state association and that association is a member of the ASA, you are already connected. These organizations now comprise the original Voting Membership of the ASA. Delegates from each of these states will collaborate via the CSA on policy development and shared governance of the Association. Each state association Voting Member of the ASA may designate two individuals to act as Delegates to the CSA. These Delegates are charged with knowing the direction, governance, primary issues, and communication structures of each of their respective states. They also keep track of discussions occurring within the ASA, and relay these back to their State Association boards for consideration. Through their work, the ASA is able to develop policy that is informed by the realities "on the ground" as seen from each state's perspective, and to craft policy that is best likely to benefit practitioners in all states.

The ASA is a maturation of the CSA, which has been an informal collaboration in evolution for 5 to 10 years. The structure of the ASA has essentially been "beta tested" via the work of the CSA, and so we are founding this organization on a solid bedrock of experience. Over the past few years, it had become increasingly clear that the work of the profession that needs to be done by the professional associations at the state level could not be optimized via the informal, collaborative structure of the CSA. Either the CSA needed to merge back into the AAAOM (out of which it originated), or it needed to become a new entity fully capable of self-governance.

For more than two years, leaders from every corner of the profession tried to find the best path. After this work, this effort that involved experienced CSA leadership, established AAAOM leadership, past-leadership of both CSA and AAAOM, and other industry stakeholders, it became clear that merging back into and with the structure of AAAOM was not a viable option. The hurdle that could not be overcome in conceptualizing the melding of CSA and AAAOM fundamentally involved commitments by both groups to contrasting membership and governance structures. Further, the priorities of the boards of the organizations are foundationally focused differently, and so the work that each of the organizations sees itself needing to do is not compatible at this time. The CSA (now ASA) and the AAAOM have agreed in professional discussion to "play in parallel" for a few years. Each organization may have gifts for the profession, and there is certainly enough work to be done.

As described, the CSA has become housed within the ASA. It forms the Kidney of the organization, and from it stems all action and motive force. The "Kidney of the Kidney" of the ASA is the individual

acupuncture professional, who is also a state association member. These individuals are the pool from which the talent of the organization arises; they are the Jing of the ASA. Joining your state association grants you participatory rights in the ASA and makes you without separate effort part of this collective. Member involvement in the state association and its governance is the primary avenue by which individual state association members have a voice in the governance of this national and international presence. Through collaborative work, the voice of the profession can be powerful and impacting.

At this time, the primary efforts of the Board of the ASA, as directed by the Council at the annual meeting this past March, are towards stabilizing the infrastructure of the ASA. This includes completing efforts towards incorporation, securing of the not-for-profit status, implementing strategy to empower voting members, and engaging vendors and other supporters whose post-natal qi can allow the organization to be sustainable without depleting our foundational resources. The board is also working to obtain benefits for individual practitioners, improve web based association management options, and create strategic alliances with like-minded organizations.

The current participants in this exciting organization hope and ask that each and every Licensed Acupuncturist (or state equivalent) join her or his state association and help to strengthen the infrastructure of the profession. There is monumental potential ahead of us, and we can achieve this together.

Initial Voting Membership of the American Society of Acupuncturists:

- California State Oriental Medical Association
- Acupuncture Association of Colorado
- Connecticut Society of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
- Acupuncture Society of DC
- Florida State Oriental Medical Association
- Florida Acupuncture Association
- Illinois Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
- Indiana Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
- Acupuncture Association of Louisiana
- Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Society of Massachusetts
- Maryland Acupuncture Society
- Maine Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
- Michigan Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
- North Carolina Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
- New Hampshire Acupuncture and Asian Medicine Association
- New Jersey Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
- New Mexico Society for Acupuncture and Asian Medicine
- Acupuncture Society of New York
- Oregon Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
- Pennsylvania Association for Professional Acupuncture
- Vermont Acupuncture Association
- Acupuncture Society of Virginia
- Washington East Asian Medicine Association
- Wisconsin Society of Certified Acupuncturists

Initial Board of the American Society of Acupuncturists:

- David W Miller, MD, LAc, Chair, Illinois
- Eric R Buckley, DOM, LAc, Vice Chair, Oregon/New Mexico
- LiMing Tseng, LAc, Secretary, Vermont
- Candace Sarges, LAc, Immediate Past Chair/Acting Treasurer, New Jersey
- Lindsay Meade, DOM, Member-at-Large, New Mexico

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