

Nevada Bill Would Eliminate OM Board

Editorial Staff | DIGITAL EXCLUSIVE

Nevada may have been the first state in the nation to legalize traditional Chinese medicine / acupuncture, but that historic accomplishment didn't stop state legislators from introducing a bill that would eliminate the Nevada State Board of Oriental Medicine.

What the Bill Would Do

AB 335 would create a Division of Occupational Licensing in the Department of Business and Industry. The division would assume oversight where the board once did - but rather than boast broad AOM representation, as the board currently does, only a single AOM practitioner would be represented on the division in matters pertaining to the profession.

The Profession Responds

The Nevada board provided a statement to *Acupuncture Today* criticizing the bill and emphasizing the threat to the state's AOM profession if the bill becomes law:

"Nevada became the first state in the United States to legalize acupuncture in 1973. Since then, the Nevada State Board of Oriental Medicine has promoted the use of Oriental Medicine, set the standards of licensing, and ensured public safety. The Board oversees a specialized area of medicine that provides valuable access to health care to rural and urban populations. The practice is highly specialized and regulation by a not-yet-created division of the Department of Business and Industry poses significant risks to patients. Specifically, a regulatory oversight body that lacks practicing members of the field may be unable to adequately interpret the standards of care that govern the practice of Oriental Medicine. The Board is concerned that the long history of Oriental Medicine in Nevada is being disregarded. This is very disturbing, not only for public safety, [but also] for the integrity of this complex medicine; and especially in light of the current climate of Asian harassment, discrimination, and violence."

The Nevada Oriental Medicine Association also released a statement on its website, excerpted as follows:

"[The NV State Board of Oriental Medicine] enforces standards of care and ensures competence within the profession. The practice of Oriental Medicine significantly differs from the other professions and should continue to have its own board that certifies competency to practice, and assure patient safety.

"Without the board of Oriental Medicine, the quality of patients' care may be disrupted, and will potentially place the public at risk. It will also impact the future of Oriental Medicine Doctor's licensing. The OMDs who respect their profession and value the quality of care would consider Nevada

as a state that does not value the practice of Oriental Medicine and the competency of the professionals.

"Please respect and value of the NV OMDs as a health profession, in alignment with medicine, nursing, physical therapy, chiropractic and others."

Finally, the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) also voiced its opposition to the legislation, providing the following statement to *Acupuncture Today*:

"The NCCAOM is concerned regarding SB 335, legislation introduced in the Nevada Senate to dissolve the Board of Oriental Medicine in Nevada and place oversight of the practice of Doctors of Oriental Medicine under the Division of Occupational Licensing of the Department of Business and Industry. The bill does not clearly define how input will be gathered or required from Doctors of OM practicing in the state of Nevada on new regulatory decisions that could impact their practice. This can result in deregulatory or restrictive actions from individuals who do not have the experience and background to regulate our unique medicine. As the great state of Nevada requires NCCAOM Certification in Oriental Medicine as a prerequisite for state licensure, it is imperative that our Diplomates in the great state of Nevada have an opportunity to have their concerns heard by the Nevada Legislature before further action is taken on this legislation."

Editor's Note: As is always the case with active legislation, AB 335 may have been amended, died in committee, moved to a vote or signed into law after our original article press date. [Click here](#) to track the current status of the bill, and look for news on major developments in a future issue of the publication.

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