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KENTUCKY PASSES FIRST ACUPUNCTURE LAW

National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine to Become the Regulatory Certification Commission for the State

Louisville, Ky. (May 17, 2006) – An eight year, arduous journey has come to an end for acupuncture and Oriental medicine practitioners and proponents living in Kentucky. Governor Ernie Fletcher signed KRS 311, the state’s first law regulating acupuncture, into effect on July 15, 2006, making Kentucky the 44th state to implement laws regulating the practice of acupuncture. In addition to the support of various organizations, the successful passing of the law is credited in part to an intensive grass-roots campaign that began in 1998 with only 18 practicing acupuncturists in Kentucky leading the effort.

The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) was invited to testify about the importance of implementing and maintaining national standards for education and certification, an important component of Kentucky’s bill. NCCAOM certification in acupuncture was passed and has now become a requirement for licensure in Kentucky, Kentucky acupuncturists worked unstintingly to get a law passed, along the way enlisting the assistance of NCCAOM, the Kentucky State Acupuncture Association (KSAA) and the AOMAlliance. The first call of duty will be to establish a board to regulate and license acupuncturists.

“The law will ensure that Kentucky moves into the category of states that have high standards for acupuncture and Oriental medicine,” said Kory Ward-Cook, Chief Executive Officer of the NCCAOM. “It means citizens will be better protected and the state will attract top acupuncturists. When you raise the standards, you attract highly qualified practitioners.”

Acupuncture is an ancient Chinese medicine treatment that relies on the painless but strategic placement of hair-like needles into key points along meridians that flow through the body. The needles unlock sluggish or deficient energy and bring balance to the body spiritually, mentally, physically and emotionally. It is a low-cost, non-invasive treatment with very little adverse side effects and has been used with great success for more than 2,000 years!

Today, many patients and doctors consider acupuncture a mainstream complementary treatment. In fact, according to NCCAOM, one in 10 adults has had acupuncture, making it one of the most popular forms of alternative medicine.

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Since 1973, when Maryland, Nevada and Oregon became the first states to pass laws on acupuncture and Oriental medicine, other states have slowly implemented laws of their own. As of today, there are still six states, including Alabama, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota and Wyoming that have no regulatory laws for the practice of acupuncture. In most of these states, only physicians and osteopaths, often with little or no formal education in acupuncture, are allowed to practice. As a result, healthcare consumers in these states may not experience the full efficacy of acupuncture treatment. In addition, the healthcare consumer is potentially placed at risk for treatment received from an unqualified individual who claims to be an acupuncturist. Without regulation, the public has no way to confirm whether a practitioner is qualified or not.

“Acupuncture is a well-regulated, well-established profession in the rest of the nation,” said Shelley Ochs, President of the Kentucky State Acupuncture Association. “I’m pleased to say that I can return to Louisville, where I was born and raised, and can practice my profession as I would be entitled to do in 43 other states.”

Along with the help from other Kentucky practitioners, Ochs worked tirelessly for the passage of this legislation. She voiced her support for the legislation, outlining the need for acupuncture to be recognized and licensed in the state of Kentucky and citing specific examples where acupuncture has resulted in clinical success stories that dramatically impacted the lives of patients.

Ochs said all states should not only pass the necessary laws, but should also designate NCCAOM certification as the requirement for determining entry-level competence. NCCAOM is recognized in 97% of the states that regulate acupuncture.

About the NCCAOM

The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) is a non-profit organization established in 1982. Its mission is to establish, assess and promote recognized standards of competence and safety in acupuncture and Oriental medicine for the protection and benefit of the public.

It is a considerable professional achievement to earn the designation “Diplomate in Acupuncture (NCCAOM).” NCCAOM certification indicates to employers, patients and peers that one has met national standards for the safe and competent practice of acupuncture as defined by the profession. The first NCCAOM Comprehensive Written Examination (CWE) in Acupuncture (ACP) was given in March 1985. Since its inception, the NCCAOM has issued more than 25,000 certificates in Acupuncture, Oriental Medicine, Chinese Herbology and Asian Bodywork Therapy.

For more information on the NCCAOM, please visit its Web site at www.nccaom.org.

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