



NCCAOM
Diplomate
E-News You Can Use
Summer 2014



JA Executive Summary Report

Utilizing Data to Empower and Promote Our Diplomates

A Message from Dr. Kory Ward-Cook, NCCAOM CEO

You can have data without information, but you cannot have information without data.

~ *Daniel Keys Moran*



In a world driven by data, the acupuncture and Oriental medicine (AOM) profession must be armed with accessible demographic, clinical practice and effectiveness metrics in order to compete in the ever growing world of healthcare. As evidenced by the 2007 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) conducted by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) and the Center for Disease Control's National Center for Health Statistics, adults in the United States spent \$33.9 billion out-of-pocket on visits to complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) and the use of acupuncture services is continuing to grow. ^[1]

The NCCAOM Board of Commissioners and staff is committed to ensuring that we can address the following questions: How can we ensure that consumers seek NCCAOM® Diplomates versus other healthcare providers who are practicing acupuncture? How can the NCCAOM establish itself as the resource for the AOM profession, the media and the public? What steps can we take to receive federal government recognition of acupuncturists? The answer to all of these questions points towards the necessity to collect reliable and valid workforce and clinical effectiveness data; therefore, it is imperative that information about the profession is collected and available in the public domain in order for acupuncturists to be recognized as a distinct profession which is recognized by the federal government. This will lead to titling and new job opportunities in the U.S. government, the Department of Defense (DOD), and the private sector healthcare organizations.

The [NCCAOM's Job Analysis \(JA\) surveys](#) have played a vital role in the collection of data about the AOM profession. The NCCAOM® Diplomat demographic and clinical practice characteristics data, collected from the 2008 and 2013 JA studies continue to be shared with governmental agencies and employers who are developing policies, protocols and occupational recognition of acupuncturists so that they may be employed or contracted to deliver acupuncture services in our healthcare system. Although the primary purpose of a JA study is to validate the content of our certification exams, the NCCAOM has leveraged this research investment to disseminate benchmark reports for our Diplomates and other interested parties. The NCCAOM first started collecting workforce related information for the AOM profession in 2008 via the



JA. The few demographic questions needed to validate the NCCAOM exam content e.g. location of practice, type of practice setting, and years in practice, were expanded to include more than 20 different demographic and clinical practice survey questions. Captured for the first time for the AOM profession, nationally, pertinent data such as income based on hours worked and questions which demonstrate growth based on practice setting, number of patient visits per week, and conditions treated were captured, comprehensively for the first time for the AOM profession. The 2013 JA was also the first to collect data, via a random stratified design methodology, from licensed acupuncturists who are not NCCAOM certified, as well as NCCAOM Diplomates, resulting in capturing a wider spectrum of licensed practitioners. The full Executive Summary for the 2013 JA is now available on [the NCCAOM website](#). See “What’s New”.

What does this data mean for the AOM profession and for you as an NCCAOM Diplomat? This data is crucial for establishing acupuncturists as a recognized, separate and distinct profession with federal agencies such as the [Department of Labor’s Bureau Statistics](#). Over the past several years, the NCCAOM, in collaboration with other AOM National organizations, made tremendous progress towards this goal. For more information on the historical progress towards the BLS goal, you can read the Acupuncture Today articles [“NCCAOM Seeks Federal Recognition of the Profession”](#) (2008) and [“Gaining an Independent Occupational Code with the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics”](#) from this year. In July of 2014, the NCCAOM officially submitted a request to the [BLS Standard Occupation Classification Policy Committee \(SOCPC\)](#) requesting that “Acupuncturists” be given an independent occupational code. Please see the final [request submission via this link](#). Through the collaboration and support of AOM organizational leaders and our Diplomates, we are on track to gain recognition for acupuncturists through the [BLS Standards of Occupational Classification \(SOC\) system](#). The NCCAOM will keep you posted on future correspondence as it is received from the BLS. A second Federal Register notice, requesting comments on the SOC recommendations is expected by Spring 2015, followed by a final decision by late 2016 or early 2017.

As an NCCAOM Diplomat, another way the NCCAOM is disseminating data from the JA’s is by publishing reports with meaningful demographics and clinical practice data such as number of patient visits by week, income by year and frequency of conditions treated by AOM practitioners. You can utilize this data to distinguish yourselves to your patients, healthcare colleagues and others from other healthcare practitioners and show that the profession is growing in many ways. Additionally, this document titled [Descriptive Demographic and Clinical Practice Profile of Acupuncturists: An Executive Summary from the NCCAOM® 2013 Job Analysis Survey](#) may also provide policy makers with information necessary to contrast the depth and breadth of AOM competencies between licensed acupuncturists who hold NCCAOM certification and those health care professionals who desire to practice AOM after an abbreviated



training program laid on top of their foundational degree in another health related discipline (e.g. Medical Doctor, Chiropractic Doctor, Naturopathic Doctor).

I hope that you, as an NCCAOM Diplomate take some time to review this benchmark report and let us know if you find the data informative to your practice. It has been over a year since the NCCAOM has collected demographic and clinical practice data via a confidential, voluntary survey offered to all Diplomates who recertify with the NCCAOM. This demographic data is also being used to create customized reports for external organizations and agencies requesting aggregate profile data on our Diplomates, so thank you to all who have completed this survey during the last two years. As always, please feel free to contact the [NCCAOM Executive Office](#) via the NCCAOM website with any questions or suggestions for improving our external surveys.

[1] Nahin, RL, Barnes PM, Stussman BJ, and Bloom B. [Costs of Complementary and Alternative Medicine \(CAM\) and Frequency of Visits to CAM Practitioners: United States, 2007](#) [360KB PDF]. National health statistics reports; no 18. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2009.

Preparation for AOM Day 2014 Begins Now



AOM Day 2014 falls on a Friday, (October 24th); therefore, this is a great opportunity to make your AOM Day celebration or event even bigger by extending it throughout the weekend!

Those of you, who last year took advantage of the opportunity to teach the general public about the benefits of acupuncture and Oriental medicine (AOM), understand just how far-reaching the effects of this type of education can be. Across the globe, during AOM Day and the weeks surrounding it, last year people from over 12 countries and over 1,300 news agencies, were learning about and experiencing this ancient medicine. As AOM practitioners, you have a unique opportunity to draw new patients to your practice through this worldwide event and introduce them to the healing power they can access with relative ease.

This year your events can easily expand past Friday into a full weekend of demonstrations, lectures, “herbal happy hours”, discounted or free treatments, acupuncture, Chinese herbology, bodywork therapy and tai chi /qigong education etc. or structure the celebration to include the whole week. [The AOM Day website](#), sponsored by the NCCAOM, is now ready for your event postings so start planning today how to bring AOM awareness to your town and local area. The re-designed AOM



Day website has some new features. Your patients will now have the access to post personal stories or testimonials, of their success with acupuncture and Oriental medicine treatments. Please share the AOM Day website information with your patients. Then, direct them to the Patient Testimonials page. This is a unique opportunity to promote both the AOM profession as a whole and your individual practice. In addition, visitors to the site will be able to search by state to find AOM Day celebrations and activities in their area.

The effort shown by everyone who participated in AOM Day 2013 was not only vitally important to increasing the progress, promise, and benefits of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, it honored a tradition of medicine which has been used for over 3,000 years. Thank you for your renewed efforts, your continued commitment to health and your outstanding compassion for those in need. To start submitting your events for AOM Day, please go to the [AOM Day website](#). Preparation for AOM Day 2014 begins NOW.

Latest Website Updates



Emphasizing the five ‘W’ words – Who, What, Where When and Why, our website www.nccaom.org has emerged as an effective tool for communication and information sharing. We are happy to present a list of the latest website updates since the beginning of 2014:

News and Events: This section was created to bring you the latest up-to-date information about NCCAOM’s internal changes, external events, and news about the AOM profession around the world. Whether you are a reader who is looking for current information about the profession, or if you are a consumer searching for stories on the efficacy of acupuncture and Oriental medicine (AOM) or simply have an interest in what is happening at the NCCAOM, you will find it in the *News and Events* webpage.

Information on the *News and Events* page is divided into three different categories:

- *Internal News and Events*, where you can find information about recent NCCAOM policy changes, Annual Reports, Fact Sheets and Newsletters.



- *Press Releases* will give you access to all major NCCAOM press releases since 2009, and
- *External News and Events*. In this category you will find articles from the media about AOM as well as the latest status on communication from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) about an independent health code for acupuncturists. We encourage you to send us positive stories about the benefits of AOM to add to the timeline of articles that are already featured in this section. Please email us at publications@thenccaom.org

Marketing for Your Practice : This section brings you tools to market your practice such as brochures which can be used to promote AOM in your waiting room and listings of information about external events in which you may wish to distribute at conferences, health fairs, etc. Below are the brochures that you can either download from the NCCAOM website or order from the NCCAOM.

- ***The NCCAOM Certification Booklets*** are full-color 8 page booklets with a detailed description of each certification program (Oriental Medicine, Acupuncture, Chinese Herbology, and Asian Bodywork Therapy). These booklets provide consumers with information about the benefits of selecting an NCCAOM Diplomate and provides them with information on how to find certified practitioners and an explanation of the training certified practitioners have achieved in comparison to other healthcare providers.
- ***Providing National Standards*** This brochure is another great tool to educate consumers about how and why to seek the help of qualified, certified and licensed practitioners.
- ***Consumer Guide*** This brochure is designed to be custom ordered for the insertion of personalized information, to include the practitioner's name, credentials and business/ practice information.
- For more information about these brochures, please go to the [marketing page](#) of the NCCAOM website.

2706 Non-Discrimination Provision Survey Results and Implications

By Bill Reddy, L.Ac., Dipl.Ac.(NCCAOM)[®]
 Director, [Integrative Healthcare Policy Consortium \(IHPC\)](#)



In late April 2014, NCCAOM Diplomates received an email survey (Subject line: “End Discrimination against Acupuncturists”). This survey linked to a polling of CAM practitioners for a [Request for Information](#) (RFI) from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), released in mid-March. The RFI was in conjunction with the proper implementation of Section 2706, provider non-discrimination. The Integrative Healthcare Policy Consortium (IHPC), a national non-profit coalition comprised of 13 organizations and institutions representing over 400,000 Complementary and Alternative Medicine (CAM) practitioners across the nation, headed up the effort to collect this information from Acupuncturists, Naturopaths, Homeopaths, Certified Professional Midwives, Chiropractors, Holistic Nurses, Physicians, Osteopaths, Optometrists, and Massage Therapists. For a more detailed discussion of Provision 2706, read the Acupuncture Today article, [A Closer Look at the Affordable Care Act: How it will Affect Your Practice.](#)”

The survey returns numbered more than 5,300 responses, representing practitioners in 50 states and three territories; 65% of which were Licensed Acupuncturists. The breakdown of professions is as follows:

[Read full article](#)

Summer Issue Spotlight

Spotlight on: Melissa B. Smith, AP Acupuncture Physician MSAOM, Dipl. O.M. (NCCAOM)[®]



Melissa Smith, is a nationally board certified physician in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. She is a Diplomate with the NCCAOM, and is licensed through the Florida Board of Health.

Question 1: Describe your journey to becoming an Acupuncture Physician:

Answer: Being a healer has been a lifelong calling for me. As a child, I set my intention to be a doctor, and did everything I could in each phase of my life to have the experiences and education to make that dream a reality. I volunteered at local hospitals and rehabilitation facilities, shadowed physicians and participated actively in Medical Explorers. In my undergraduate education, I majored in biology and pre-medicine and continued my volunteer work and assisted doing research with a clinical psychologist at Good



Shepherd Rehabilitation Hospital. With the intention of gaining more experience and exposure to medicine, I completed a summer of intensive training and worked at Sacred Heart Hospital as a nursing assistant and EKG technician. After working full time in a very busy and stressful medical setting, I realized in my heart that I wanted to be able to spend more time with the patients than was possible for me in the current medical model. Maintaining my heart in medicine is very important to me. I came to realize the importance of taking the time to really sit, listen and care for each patient as being essential in their healing process. I feel passionately about being able to take the time to truly care for those individuals who come to me for healing. After taking a class on the philosophy of Chinese Medicine in undergrad and studying and experiencing the healing power of Chinese Medicine first hand while attending the naturopathic medical program at Bastyr University, I realized, Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) had everything I wanted to offer to patients.

I graduated cum laude with a Bachelors of Science in Biology from Cedar Crest College in Allentown, PA, a four year liberal arts college founded in 1867. After which time, I studied for three years at Bastyr University, a Naturopathic Medical school in Seattle Washington, where I focused on whole foods cooking and nutrition, diet therapy, acupuncture and massage. Two of those three years were spent studying western sciences on a doctorate level. Following that, I graduated from the Seattle Institute of Oriental Medicine (SIOM) in 2004, one of the top schools in the country, renowned for its apprentice style and clinical training for Acupuncturists and Chinese Herbalists. My focus at SIOM was herbal medicine and acupuncture in the treatment of gynecological disorders, specifically the treatment of infertility and endometriosis, as well as the treatment of fibromyalgia and skin conditions. I also spent five years translating Medical Chinese.

Question 2: How has your Western medicine training benefited your current practice?

Answer: My training in Western medicine has enabled me to be a better diagnostician as well as being able to identify red flags and triage patients to the best of my scope of practice, making appropriate referrals to other practitioners and ensuring patients are receiving the best care possible. I feel that my Western medicine training is essential to being able to understand and communicate with patients and the other practitioners on their health care team.

Question 3: Why did you pursue an NCCAOM certification?

Answer: I pursued an NCCAOM certification as part of passing the certification exams for licensure; I appreciated the high standard that must be attained to hold these credentials.



Question 4: How does your NCCAOM certification set you apart from non-Diplomates?

Answer: I feel the certification offers a degree of certainty that I have been educated, trained and documented achievement to a high standard within our professional community, which includes maintaining that standard with my recertification.

Question 5: How do your patients value your certification?

Answer: Patients want to feel comfortable knowing that I, as their practitioner, have a certain level of accountability as far as maintaining a high level of continuing education credits as well as passing a comprehensive exam initially. These achievements exceed what the state requires so patients have the comfort of knowing I have chosen to go above and beyond the minimum state requirement as a professional in the field.

Question 6: What would you say to new practitioners regarding the value of achieving NCCAOM Diplomat status?

Answer: I believe the exam and the requirements to maintain Diplomat status provides me with a competitive edge as a practitioner. Meeting and maintaining this baseline for excellence as a medical professional offers a way to document my competency as a health care provider to my patients and my colleagues in the health care industry.

Video Contest “Because it Works!”



To enhance the celebration of AOM Day 2014, the NCCAOM is excited to announce the launch of a video contest “Because it Works!” on August 1, 2014. NCCAOM Certified Diplomates were invited to enter for a chance to win a new iPad, free recertification, and more.

The contest seeks to highlight the many benefits of acupuncture and Oriental medicine. Five semi-finalists will be chosen online by popular vote. Out of the five semi-finalists the top three contestants will be chosen by a panel of judges. The three chosen contestants will receive prizes and the satisfaction of having their success story showcased on the NCCAOM website,



the AOM Day website and the newly launched NCCAOM® YouTube channel (to be launched later this year).

The contest will be open to receive entries and for public voting between August 1 - October 1, 2014. The winners will be announced on October 24 (AOM Day). Winning the “Because it Works” video contest not only lends prestige to the chosen practitioners, but also can serve as a catalyst to promote the medicine and build a strong foundation for the AOM profession in the United States. This is your opportunity to be a part of the legacy of the treasure that is known as acupuncture and Oriental medicine. For details to enter the contest, or vote on contest videos, follow this link to the [Video Contest](#).