



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: Sabrina Suarez, Echo Media Group
714-573-0899 ext. 227
sabrina@echomediapr.com

The Joint Commission Introduces Revised Pain Assessment and Management Standards, for Accredited Hospitals, to Include Use of Non-Pharmacologic Treatments and Strategies*

The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM)[®] Stresses Importance of Including Nondrug Approaches Administered by Licensed Independent Practitioners for Pain Management

JACKSONVILLE, FL, July 12, 2017 – The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM)[®], which has long advocated non-pharmacological treatments, commends The Joint Commission, an independent, not-for-profit organization that accredits nearly 21,000 health care organizations and programs in the United States, for their revised pain management standards. The updated standards, effective January 1, 2018, will require Joint Commission accredited hospitals provide nonpharmacological pain modalities, including acupuncture as one option, by licensed independent practitioners.

“These new guidelines, will help tens of thousands dealing with acute and chronic pain to reduce pain and the risk of opioid addiction,” said F. Afua Bromley, Dipl. Ac., (NCCAOM)[®], L.Ac., Chair of the NCCAOM Board of Commissioners. “Combined with the May 2017 U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) recommendation that healthcare providers be knowledgeable about the range of available non-pharmacological therapies as part of a multidisciplinary approach to pain, ** to include acupuncture, these updated guidelines will usher in a more comprehensive strategy for pain management, said Bromley.”

The Joint Commission’s revised requirements were developed through a rigorous research, evaluation and review process. In 2013, Arya Nielsen, Ph.D., Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM)[®], along with colleagues Ben Kligler, MD, and Marsha Handel, MS, requested a review, by The Joint Commission to require nonpharmacological interventions based on the available evidence. The Joint Commission response was immediate and positive, resulting in the recruitment of panel consultant stakeholder experts, including Dr. Nielsen, to review the pain management language, that culminated in a [January 1, 2015 clarification statement](#), wherein The Joint Commission emphasized nonpharmacologic therapies were always meant to be included as part of pain strategy options, and specified effective evidence-based nonpharmacologic modalities.

In their ongoing response to the opioid crisis and continued calls to make effective therapies available to patients, The Joint Commission’s revision mandate will now require accredited hospitals to provide nonpharmacological approaches to pain, hire licensed independent practitioners, and ‘...provide educational resources and programs to improve pain assessment, pain management and the safe use of opioid medications based on identified needs of its patient population’. [These new Joint Commission’s Elements of Performance go into effect January 1, 2018.](#)

“As rates of addiction to, and deaths from, prescription opioids such as oxycodone, hydrocodone, and methadone continue to rise, awareness and incorporation of effective, non-pharmacological, non-invasive therapies like

acupuncture is more important than ever,” said Kory Ward-Cook, Ph.D., CAE, Chief Executive Officer of the NCCAOM. “The NCCAOM Board Commissioners commends The Joint Commission on these timely and crucial pain management standards, which will bring greater and much needed access to qualified licensed acupuncturists to help alleviate and manage pain.”

The NCCAOM would also like to thank Dr. Nielsen, Dr. Kligler, Marsha Handel and the [Academic Consortium for Integrative Medicine and Health](#), for their persistence in presenting the evidence to The Joint Commission, in requesting a change in our national pain strategy to include nonpharmacologic therapies.

The NCCAOM’s mission is *to assure the safety and well-being of the public and promote national evidence-based standards of competence*. The NCCAOM is the only nationally accredited certification organization that assures entry-level competency for licensed acupuncturists. NCCAOM Nationally Board-Certified Acupuncturists™ receive years of education and training in many methods of acupuncture therapies for the treatment of pain, as well as a wide variety of other health conditions.

To learn more about how acupuncture can help with pain management visit the NCCAOM’s [Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine News and Resource Center](#). To find an NCCAOM Nationally Board Certified™ practitioner in your area, click on *Find a Practitioner* at www.nccaom.org.

###

About NCCAOM®

The [National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine \(NCCAOM\)®](#) is a non-profit 501(c)(6) organization established in 1982. NCCAOM is the only national organization that validates entry-level competency in the practice of acupuncture and Oriental medicine (AOM) through professional certification. NCCAOM certification or a passing score on the NCCAOM certification examinations are documentation of competency for licensure as an acupuncturist by 46 states plus the District of Columbia which represents 98% of the states that regulate acupuncture. All NCCAOM certification programs are currently accredited by the [National Commission for Certification Agencies \(NCCA\)](#). To learn more about the NCCAOM and the NCCAOM Academy of Diplomates, and to find an NCCAOM Nationally Board-Certified Acupuncturists™ visit www.nccaom.org.

About Joint Commission

The [Joint Commission](#) is an independent, not-for-profit organization and the largest accreditation body in the U.S. with over 21,000 accredited or certified health care organization and programs, including hospitals, ambulatory care clinics, behavioral health settings, nursing care centers, office-based surgery programs, behavioral health and home care programs

[*Joint Commission Enhances Pain Assessment and Management Requirements for Accredited Hospitals. Perspectives, the Official Newsletter of The Joint Commission. 2017.](#)

[**FDA Education Blueprint for Health Care Providers Involved in the Management or Support of Patients with Pain \(May 2017\)](#)