



Diplomate E-News You Can Use

December 2023



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CEO and Chair Holiday Message: Celebrating our Past, Embracing our Future



The NCCAOM Board of Commissioners and staff share our warmest wishes for a Holiday Season filled with joy and a New Year of peace and prosperity. As 2023 draws to a close, we reflect on the incredible journey we've undertaken together this past year. It has been a year of remarkable achievements, growth, and collaboration that has shaped the landscape of our profession.

In our unwavering commitment to fortify ethical standards and accountability within our profession, the NCCAOM's Professional Ethics and Disciplinary Committee (PEDC), led by Chair Michael Taromina, Esq., has undergone crucial updates. These revisions include detailed Diplomate reporting requirements, emphasizing the critical duty to self-report within thirty days, with a focus on significant ethical concerns.

Further, the PEDC has established a groundbreaking cooperation agreement with state licensing boards nationwide, facilitating the sharing of disciplinary data. This advancement aims to prevent practitioners facing disciplinary actions from evading accountability. To streamline reporting, practitioners can utilize email or the built-in reporting tool on the NCCAOM website. This commitment to transparency is reinforced through the newly launched PEDR section on our website, offering easy access to information and resources related to professional ethics and disciplinary matters.

In a momentous stride towards advancing our profession, the NCCAOM advocacy team, in collaboration with the American Society for Acupuncturists (ASA) advocacy



team, continues to champion bipartisan support for H.R. 3133, the Acupuncture for our Seniors Act. Introduced in May by U.S. Representatives Judy Chu (D – California) and Brian Fitzpatrick, (Pennsylvania), this bill aims to authorize the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) to recognize qualified acupuncturists as healthcare providers. The proposed legislation has garnered significant traction, with 16 co-sponsors and ongoing efforts to secure more from both the Energy & Commerce and the Ways & Means Committees. As part of our grassroots initiatives, practitioners and supporters can actively contribute by participating in virtual Congressional meetings organized by ASA/NCCAOM or utilizing the grassroots software platform to contact Congressional Representatives. This comprehensive advocacy approach aligns with our commitment to ensure Medicare recognition, enabling acupuncturists to directly bill for covered services and expand access to qualified care for those over 65. The NCCAOM Advocacy Team remains dedicated to representing Diplomates and welcomes input on issues, challenges, or opportunities to further enhance our profession. You can read more about these efforts in this edition of our newsletter

As we navigated the year, we participated in key events such as the ASA Annual Conference, Hill Day for the *Acupuncture for Our Seniors Act* (HR 3133), and the FSOMA 2023 Annual Conference. These engagements powerfully underscore our unwavering dedication to fervently championing the profound significance of acupuncture and herbal medicine through bold and strategic advocacy initiatives.

In October, we celebrated [Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine Day with a Town Hall meeting](#) co-hosted by the American Society of Acupuncturists (ASA). In November we celebrated World Acupuncture Awareness Day on November 16th. A global movement involving 50 organizations aims to establish TCM within its own domain, emphasizing the need for unified standards and public awareness campaigns. These celebrations reaffirm this commitment each year.

In 2023 the NCCAOM hosted webinars for students and schools, highlighting the commitment to nurturing the next generation. Throughout the year NCCAOM continued to connect with our Diplomates, Students, PDA Providers, and State Regulators through our series of Webinars, Town Halls co-hosted by the ASA. PEDC Chair Michael Taromina also provided many captivating presentations at several events across the country. The year was further shaped by focusing on recertification and updates to the [Find a Practitioner \(FAP\)](#) and Chi Online free websites provided as benefits to Diplomates.

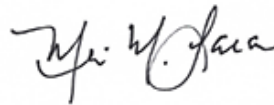


As the year concludes, we express our heartfelt appreciation to all of our dedicated volunteers, Commissioners, and staff who have contributed to our successes. Special gratitude goes to Irene Basore, our Director of Administration and Governance, who retires after 16 years of dedicated service. In closing, I extend warm wishes to you and your loved ones for a peaceful and joyous holiday season. Your commitment to excellence and the advancement of our profession inspires us, and we eagerly anticipate embracing the opportunities that the future holds.

With gratitude,



Janet Zand, O.M.D., Dipl. Ac., C.H., O.M.
(NCCAOM)[®], L.Ac., CCN
Board Chair



Mina M. Larson, M.S., MBA, CAE
CEO

NCCAOM Holiday Closure Notice

The NCCAOM Offices will be closed for the Winter Holiday break from 4 PM EDT on Friday, December 22nd, 2023, through Monday, January 1st, 2024.

Our offices will reopen at 9 AM EDT on January 2th, 2024.

If you need help with your certification or recertification application, please [***contact us***](#) as soon as possible.

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If you need assistance please contact us via email at [***info@thenccaom.org***](mailto:info@thenccaom.org).



NCCAOM Advocacy Update – December 2023

By Molly Giammarco, Senior Manager, Policy & Government Relations



The NCCAOM® Advocacy team represents NCCAOM certification, Diplomates, and stakeholders by providing information to promote acupuncture services to state and federal policymakers, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), as well as other stakeholder groups.

Advocacy News

Update on The Acupuncture for our Seniors Act

The NCCAOM advocacy team continues to hold virtual and in-person Congressional meetings with acupuncturists to advocate for H.R. 3133, *the Acupuncture for our Seniors Act*. As of December 1, 2023, H.R. 3133 has 16 co-sponsors, resulting from our constituent meetings and ongoing support from previous co-sponsors.

Learn More about the Medicare-Recognition Effort

The NCCAOM, in partnership with the ASA, hosted a webinar in early November to provide an overview of the profession's efforts to obtain Medicare recognition, as well as strategy for advancing H.R. 3133. [View a recording on the webinar](#) to learn more about recent advocacy and the benefits of obtaining Medicare recognition.

Sign up for Virtual Congressional Meetings



The NCCAOM needs Diplomates' help! The constituent voice is a powerful part of the legislative process, and acupuncturists provide a unique and compelling perspective on why this bill is critical to Senior Citizens, as well as to the profession. If you are interested in signing up for a virtual Congressional meeting, please scan the QR code below or [follow this link](#). The NCCAOM advocacy team will take care of everything (scheduling, talking points, preparing you) and will participate in these meetings with you. A big thank you to those who have already participated in Congressional meetings this year. If you participated in a meeting in 2021-2022, we welcome your help again:



Grassroots at your Fingertips

The NCCAOM advocacy team offers its grassroots software platform to help you, your patients, Senior Citizens, and general supporters of the profession message their U.S. Representatives about H.R. 3133. Simply text any of the following phrases to 52886:

- “Acupuncture” – Acupuncture Campaign
- “Student” – Student Campaign
- “Acupuncture Patient” – Patient Campaign
- “Acupuncture Senior” – Senior Citizen Campaign
- “Acupuncture Ally” – Ally Campaign

After texting 52886, follow the generated link to an email and Twitter message that you can send to your Representatives as is, or modify to provide additional information.

Example: If you're an acupuncturist, type *Acupuncture* to 52886, if you're a student, type *Student* to 52886, etc.



Medicare-Recognition Background

Obtaining provider status under Medicare would enable acupuncturists to directly bill Medicare for the covered services that they provide to Medicare beneficiaries (generally those 65 and older). This recognition is critical to advancing the acupuncturist profession, as it would grant more individuals access to qualified acupuncturists—and more qualified acupuncturists access to those over 65 years of age. Medicare recognition would also help the profession collect and generate data on the acupuncture benefits, particularly with regard to quality and cost.

CMS just covers acupuncture services for chronic lower back pain (cLBP), but does not recognize acupuncturists as providers of this service. This lack of recognition prevents much of the profession from readily treating Medicare beneficiaries for chronic pain. The resulting barrier inhibits those with the most expertise and training in acupuncture from providing these services.

The NCCAOM and ASA continue to maintain a series of resources to help educate the profession on Medicare recognition and the steps required for Medicare provider status. Read more about how Medicare provider status would affect the profession by visiting the [NCCAOM's Advocacy Page](#).

The NCCAOM Advocacy Represents You

The NCCAOM advocacy team works tirelessly to advocate for its Diplomates. If there is an issue, challenge, or opportunity you would like to convey to the team, please do not hesitate to reach out!

Read more about the NCCAOM's advocacy efforts at the [NCCAOM Advocacy Page](#). Please contact the [NCCAOM Advocacy team](#) with any questions regarding the NCCAOM's Advocacy efforts and ways to get involved.

The NCCAOM Advocacy Team



Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine Day 2023

By Chris Minar Manager, Marketing and Communications



Monday, October 24th, 2023, marked the vibrant celebration of [Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine \(AHM\) Day](#), echoing the spirit of global unity in promoting the profound impact of acupuncture and herbal medicine on individuals worldwide. This year's festivities coincided with the [World Acupuncture Awareness Day](#) on November 16th, a global effort led by major associations and professional organizations to increase visibility and recognition acupuncture and herbal medicine on a worldwide scale.

In the collaborative effort to commemorate these significant occasions, the NCCAOM and the American Society of Acupuncturists (ASA) orchestrated a multitude of events, emphasizing the historical achievements and contemporary relevance of acupuncture. The 2023 Instagram Photo Contest, held throughout the Fall, provided practitioners, patients, and students with a unique platform to share their love for acupuncture and herbal medicine through captivating photos. The winning entries, announced on October 24th, received recognition on NCCAOM's social media platforms and even earned participants 2 NCCAOM PDA points, further fostering a sense of community.



The NCCAOM and ASA thank all the entries in the 2023 AHM Day Photo/Video contest. Your participation helps make AHM Day special each year. Thank you to everyone that entered, engaged online, and supported this celebration of AHM Day. Finally, we would like to congratulate the winners in their respective categories:

The focal point of celebration was the [virtual Town Hall meeting](#), co-hosted by Afua Bromley and LiMing Tseng, co-chairs of the NCCAOM & ASA Cultural Competency Task Force. Scheduled on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 7:00 PM EDT, this event welcomed all Licensed Acupuncturists to join and partake in inspiring conversations with guest speakers Angela Ying Tu and Beth Howlett. These seasoned professionals shared their leadership experiences, shedding light on the profound contributions of practitioners shaping the foundation of the acupuncture profession in the United States.

Moreover, AHM Day extended its influence beyond individual celebrations by offering a unique opportunity to host virtual or in-person events through the annual [AHM Day event drive](#). NCCAOM Diplomates who registered and submitted photos showcasing their celebrations received 2 NCCAOM PDA points, contributing to the collaborative spirit of AHM Day.

As the celebration unfolded, the NCCAOM and ASA emphasized the importance of [raising public awareness through free marketing materials](#) and a raffle drawing for a Free Premium website for Acupuncturists, provided by Acupuncture Media Works and AcuPerfect Websites. This strategic effort aimed to empower practitioners in promoting AHM Day within their communities and online, showcasing the efficacy of acupuncture and herbal medicine.

In essence, Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine Day 2023 served as a rallying point for practitioners worldwide to unite, dispel misconceptions, and celebrate the ancient wisdom and modern-day relevance of acupuncture and herbal medicine. Through a diverse range of activities, including the Instagram Photo Contest, the virtual Town Hall meeting, and the AHM Day event drive, practitioners had the opportunity to share personal experiences, success stories, and testimonials, fostering a broader

2023 AHM Day Photo/Video Contest Winners:



Yael Markowicz
I love what I do
- Practitioner
Perspective

Melissa Lahmeyer
I love Acupuncture
- Patient
Perspective





appreciation for this profound healing modality. The celebration underscored the global impact of acupuncture and herbal medicine, inviting practitioners to be the voice, the bridge, and the change in promoting this transformative practice.

World Acupuncture Day

In addition to the AHM Day celebrations, we also celebrated World Acupuncture Day on November 16th, a global initiative involving major associations and professional organizations in the profession of acupuncture and herbal medicine (AHM). This collective effort spanned countries from New Zealand to the Middle East, promoting AHM through social media and the press. The significance lies in the transitional state of the profession, with progress recognized by entities like the NCCAOM and the World Health Organization. However, the growing interest from other healthcare professions poses a threat. To address this, a global movement, supported by 50 organizations, aims to enhance visibility and establish AHM within its own domain. The commemoration of World Acupuncture Day is part of these efforts. The profession also faces the challenge of adapting to a borderless global representation, necessitating unified standards, cross-country accreditation, and public awareness campaigns. Individuals are encouraged to contribute to education and promotion through www.idoacupuncture.com.

Diplomate Satisfaction Survey Results

By Olga Cox, Chief Operations Officer

Introduction

Since 2005, the NCCAOM has consistently carried out the Diplomate Satisfaction Survey. The main objective of this survey is to gather valuable feedback from our NCCAOM Board-Certified Acupuncturists™, gauging their satisfaction with NCCAOM services. Additionally, it serves as a platform to share comments and suggestions that will contribute to enhancing the benefits offered to our Diplomates going forward. As a result of the feedback that we received from the previous satisfaction surveys, the NCCAOM created:

- New Certificate of Completion Distribution system for PDA providers.
- New CE Banking functionality where PDA points for NCCAOM approved courses



are automatically reported to the Diplomate's Recertification Transcript.

- New "My Learning" section that houses Diplomate's certificates of completion for PDA approved courses completed since January 2021.
- New Digital Badging, a digital credential, created to be used by NCCAOM certified Diplomates to promote their NCCAOM certification.

The 2023 Diplomate Satisfaction Survey was conducted from August 21 to September 30, 2023. The survey was sent to all active Diplomates who completed at least one recertification process (approximately 16,820 Diplomates).

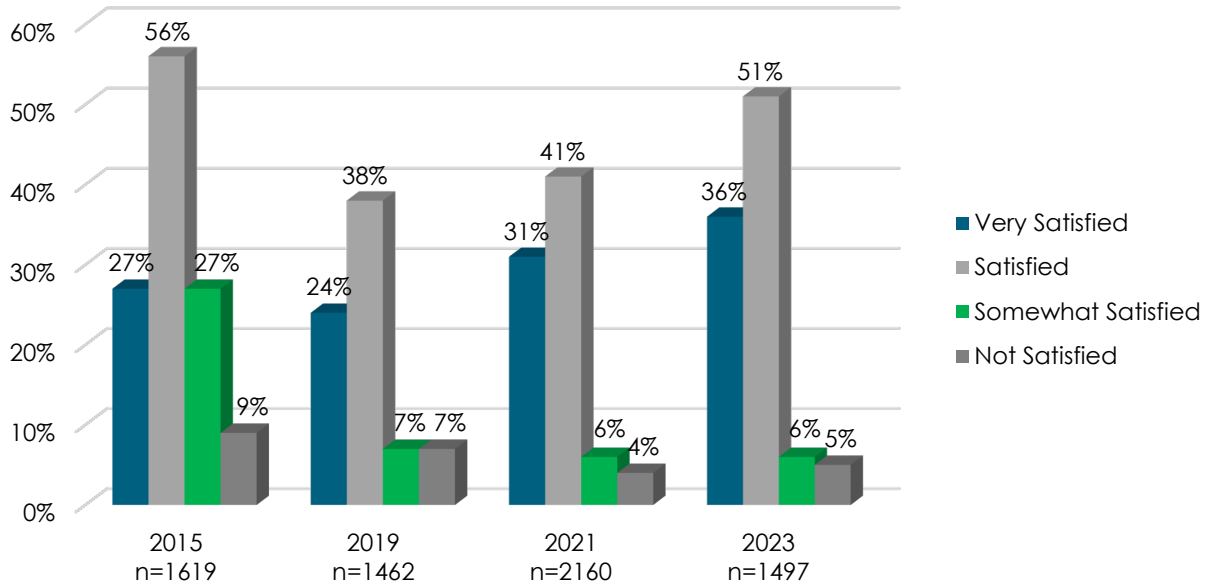
A total of 1,851 Diplomates responded to and completed the survey. The NCCAOM would like to thank everyone who took the time to complete the 2023 Diplomate Satisfaction Survey. The results of this survey will serve as a new benchmark as NCCAOM continues to strive for increased customer satisfaction.

Results

Combining all survey responses, there is an 86% overall customer service satisfaction rating in the top two categories ("Very Satisfied" and "Satisfied").

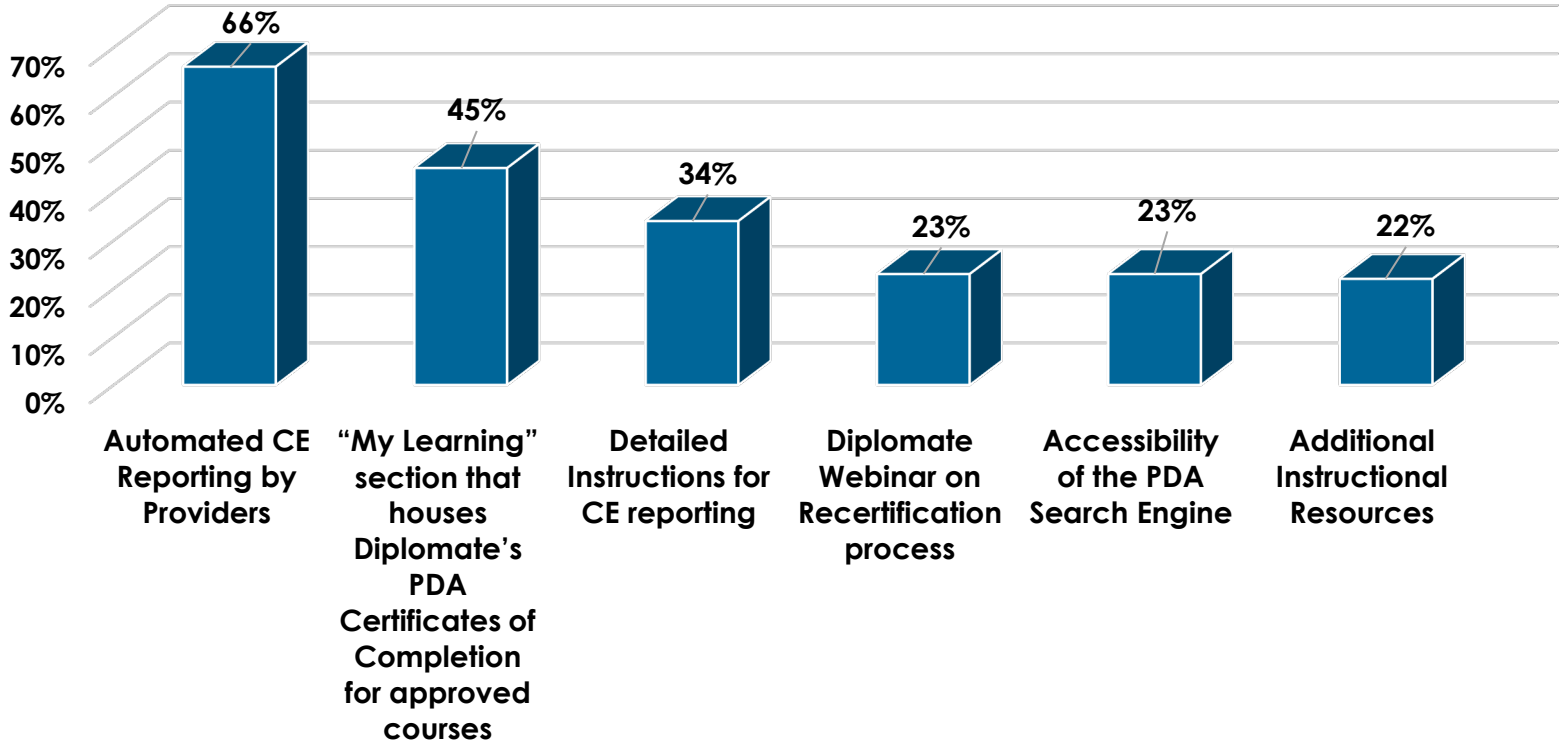
We attribute this good news as a result of the staff's commitment to continuously improve our customer service and to NCCAOM's management who always strive toward an even higher goal of excellence in customer satisfaction.

Graph1: Overall Experience with the NCCAOM



Graph 2 below shows the Diplomates’ perceptions on the Importance of Improvements to the Recertification Process currently offered.

Graph 2: Qualitative and Quantitative Data of NCCAOM Recertification Process



As a result of your direct feedback, the NCCAOM worked on the following action items:

- Additional instructional materials about recertification have been posted to the [Diplomat Resources section](#) and [Certification Renewal section](#) of the NCCAOM website.
- A link to instructional materials for CE reporting has been posted to the CE Reporting section of each Diplomat's Profile.

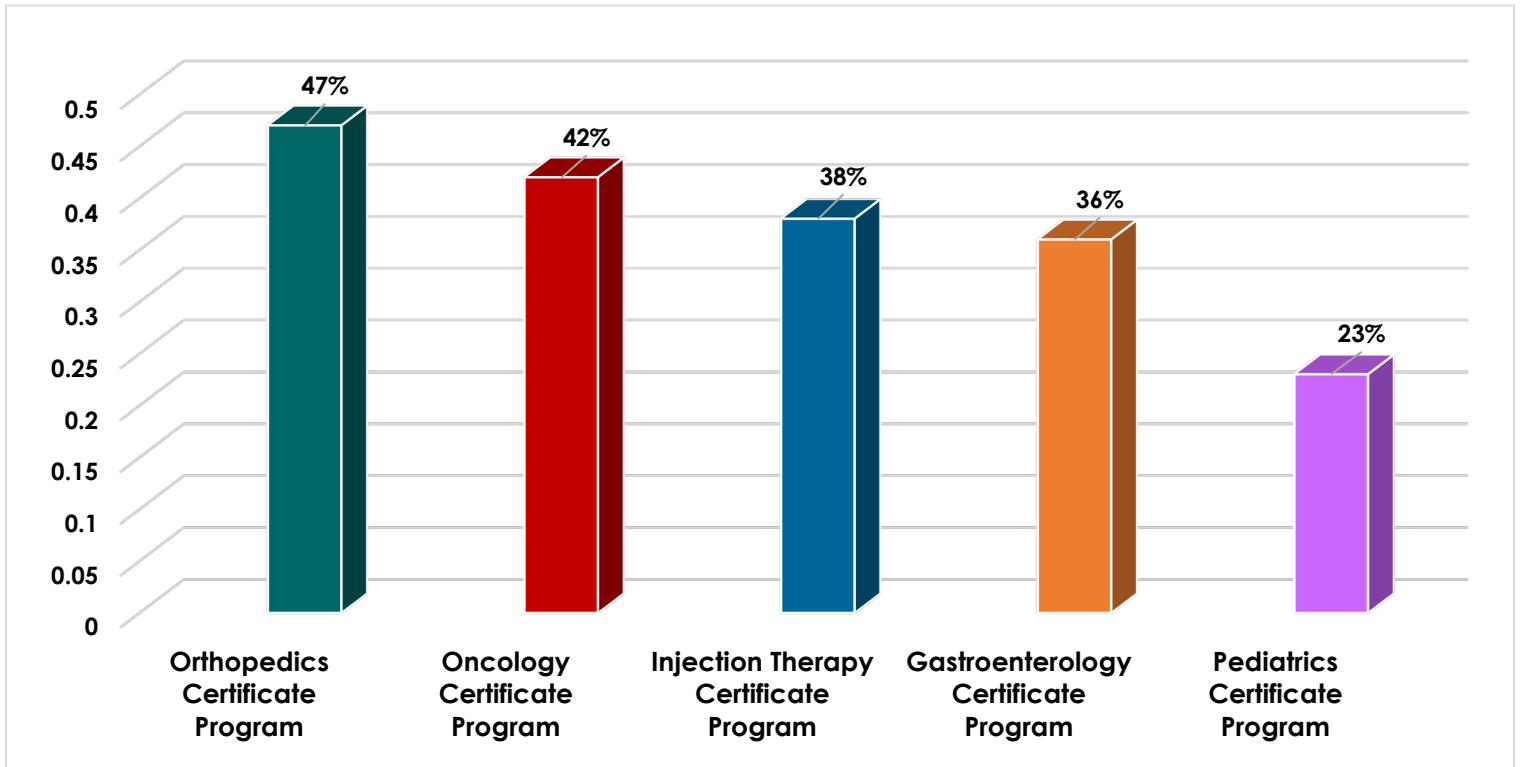


- Articles are being published regularly in the “Diplomate News You Can Use” newsletter. For details, visit our [newsletter archives](#).
- The NCCAOM® Recertification Handbook is being updated to better portray the recertification process in a more clear and concise manner.

The NCCAOM staff is also working tirelessly to perfect the online recertification process for its NCCAOM Board-Certified Acupuncturists. By working closely with PDA Providers since January 2020, the NCCAOM transitioned to an automatic CE reporting for PDA approved courses. The 2023 Satisfaction Survey indicates that 89% of respondents are either "Very Satisfied," "Satisfied," or "Somewhat Satisfied" with the current Recertification process.

Question 5 on the survey asked: *Which of the following certificate programs would you be interested in as an NCCAOM Diplomate?* The Graph 3 below reflects respondents’ interest in specific areas of certificate program development. This information will play a crucial role in our market analysis study for the development of new products for our Diplomates.

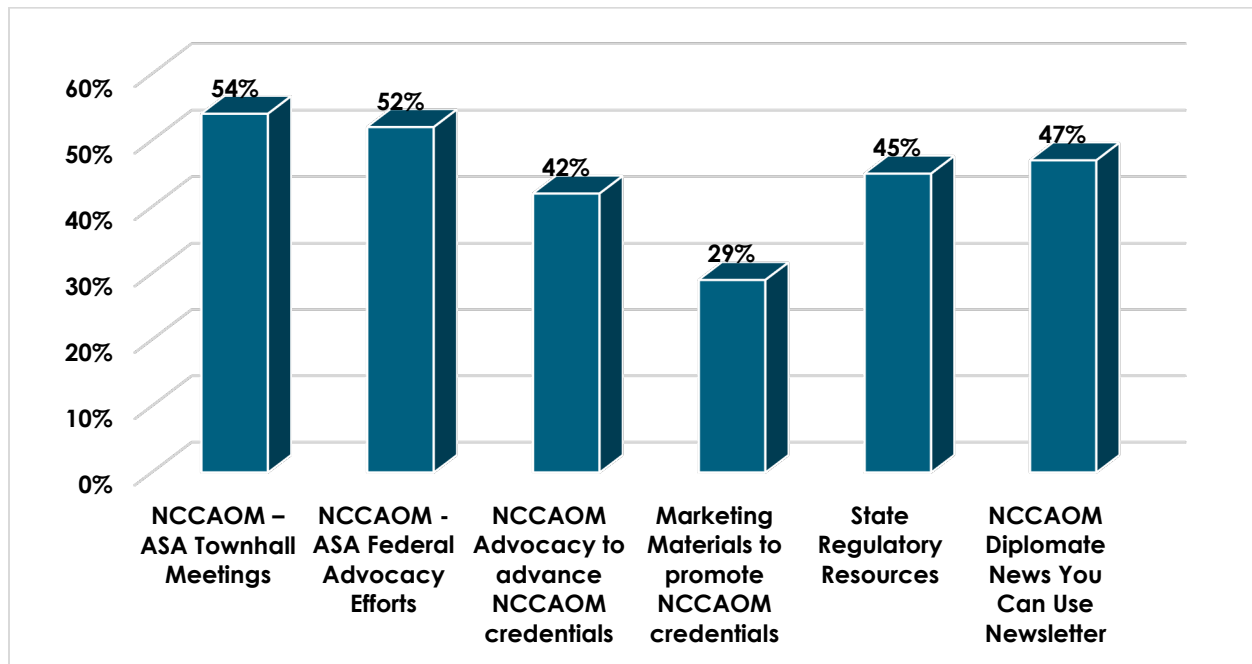
Graph 3. Diplomates’ Interest in Specialty Certificate program



Every Diplomate Satisfaction Survey features a distinct question to help us better customize our services and products to further benefit the Diplomate population. This year, Question 5 focused on which continued services are most valuable to our Diplomates. Based on the quantitative data shown in Graph 3, the survey results revealed that the NCCAOM – ASA Townhall Meetings garnered the most interest amongst respondents:

- NCCAOM – ASA Townhall Meetings (54%)
- NCCAOM - ASA Federal Advocacy Efforts (52%)
- NCCAOM New YOU Can Use Newsletter (52%)

Graph 4: Qualitative Data and Quantitative of Diplomate Services



This is one of the reasons why NCCAOM is fostering a collaborative partnership with the American Society of Acupuncturists (ASA) and continues investing in Advocacy and Government Relations experts. Our primary goal is to advance the value of NCCAOM National Board-Certified Acupuncturists™ at the national level. This requires engagement with federal agencies and Congress on legislation impacting acupuncturists, grassroots efforts to build awareness of acupuncture and to raise the profile of acupuncture, our Diplomates, and the value of NCCAOM Board Certification. Visit the [NCCAOM Federal Recognition Timeline](#) on our website.

Overview of Survey Results

- An 86% overall customer service satisfaction in the top two categories (“very satisfied” and “satisfied”).
- There was a 15% increase in the number of Diplomates that were “satisfied” or “very satisfied” in 2023 as compared to 2021.
- A decrease of 4% in the “somewhat satisfied” and “not satisfied” categories as compared to the 2021 survey.



- 65% of the qualitative responses are in the four categories:
 - Value of Certification
 - Customer Service
 - Online Recertification
 - Advocacy

Based on the Overview of Survey Results, the NCCAOM will continue to educate our Diplomates about the mission of the NCCAOM and the services we provide to protect the public as a National Certification Board and our work to bring value to our Diplomates' credential.

The NCCAOM's strives for an excellence in customer satisfaction. To accomplish this, we will continue to guide our Diplomates through recertification processes by providing accurate information to and offering unique and meaningful services.

New-and-Improved NCCAOM Free Website Benefit

For your wellness practice to thrive in the modern world, you need to have the best visual representation on the Internet.

That is why NCCAOM and ChiOnline are proud to announce the release of a new-and-improved NCCAOM Free Website benefit for your acupuncture and Herbal medicine practice that will attract new patients, boost your referrals, and build the wellness practice of your dreams.

Create Your New Acupuncture and Herbal Medicine Site in 2 Minutes:
Just click this link and then click the "Sign Up" button at the top of the screen:
www.NCCAOMDiplomates.com/login

To upgrade your existing NCCAOM/ChiOnline site, click the big yellow "post-it note" at the bottom of the main Control Panel Screen.



Enhancing Recertification: Your Feedback, Your Resources

By Olga Cox, Chief Operating Officer, NCCAOM

In the dynamic landscape of professional certifications, staying current and maintaining up-to-date credentials is a paramount responsibility. In the wake of a comprehensive Diplomate Satisfaction Survey in 2023, aimed at enhancing the NCCAOM Products and services, we are now equipped with invaluable insights into our Diplomates' recertification experiences. As a response to the valuable feedback received, this article explores the enhanced array of recertification resources tailored to address the specific needs and preferences voiced by Survey respondents. Navigating the landscape of continuing education can be a complex endeavor but armed with tailored resources from personalized learning platforms to targeted support services, discover the arsenal of tools at your disposal designed to elevate the recertification process.

Diplomate Recertification Resources

Instructional Resources – Extensive library of instructional documents is posted to the NCCAOM website under Resources=>Diplomate Resources=> Form & Documents and includes Instructions on CE Reporting, Application Submission Instructions and Step-by-Step Guide on Accessibility of the PDA Search Engine.

Automated CE Reporting by Providers shortly called CE banking allows PDA Providers to report PDA points for approved courses directly to the Diplomates' NCCAOM Recertification Transcript. The major critical requirement for CE Banking to work properly lies in the proper course registration process by Diplomates. It is the sole responsibility of a Diplomate to ensure their First and Last name as well as their NCCAOM ID number entered during the course registration process are the same as reflected in their NCCAOM certification account.

My Learning Section of the Diplomate's portal is designed to be a repository of PDA-approved courses and houses certificates of completion for courses taken by a Diplomate. Certificates in the My Learning section can be downloaded and used for state licensing purposes. Click here for instructions on accessing the "My Learning" section.

Diplomate Webinar on Recertification Process: The NCCAOM staff held this webinar earlier this year, and the recording, PowerPoint slides, and Q&A Fact Sheet are posted on the NCCAOM website. A quick link is available here for your convenience.



Accessibility of the PDA Search Engine: The Directory of PDA Approved Courses (PDA Search Engine) is available on the NCCAOM website and provides access to over 3,000 courses. [Click here](#) for instructions on how to access the PDA Search Engine and search for courses of interest.

In conclusion, the journey toward recertification is significantly enriched by the wealth of resources now at our Diplomates' disposal. The insights gleaned from our recent satisfaction survey have played a pivotal role in tailoring these resources to meet Diplomates' specific needs. Your feedback has fueled our commitment to providing an unparalleled recertification experience. Whether it's the integration of user-friendly platforms, personalized support services, or enhanced learning materials, your input has shaped a comprehensive suite of tools designed to empower your professional growth. As you embark on the path of recertification, rest assured that your suggestions continue to guide our efforts, ensuring that the resources available align seamlessly with your evolving needs and aspirations. We look forward to supporting you on your journey of continued excellence in your field.

Diplomate Spotlight: Sara Rodefeld, Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM)[®]

Coordinated by Melissa Dow Manager, Volunteer Development and Special Projects

Once a quarter the NCCAOM draws the name of a recently recertified Diplomate who has completed the NCCAOM[®] Diplomate Demographic Survey. This is a very important survey that provides NCCAOM and the profession with much needed demographic information for projects such as federal recognition.



I have a degree from Indiana University School of Nursing. Soon after graduation I relocated to Nashville, Tennessee where I began my nursing career at Vanderbilt University Medical Center, a teaching hospital. Over many years I transitioned from general nursing to trauma/critical care nursing to an administrative role managing a Level I Trauma Unit. The experience of working in both nursing and administration in a teaching hospital was challenging, rewarding and stimulating. I was surrounded by physicians and nurses equally curious and intent on excellence in healthcare, but I soon recognized Western medicine has its limits. After 17 years at Vanderbilt I began exploring alternative approaches to wellness. In 1999 I graduated from the Academy for Five Element Acupuncture in Florida and embarked upon a career in Acupuncture. In partnership with an established Nashville Diplomate, Peggy Watson, we had a vibrant

and rewarding Five Element practice treating a wide range of problems and personalities in the Music City. In 2016 I relocated to Indiana to be closer to my extended family and started a new practice in Indianapolis. My current practice in Indianapolis is more relaxed and spacious than my very busy fulltime practice was in Nashville. Her interviews and articles have appeared in several national publications, most recently Natural Health, October 2006 and Total Health and Longevity and Pulse.

I follow the Worsley Five Element principles of treatment using Causative Factor as the basis of my treatment planning. This is regardless of what the client describes as their problem or ailment. I have stayed “true” to the Five Element tradition and by doing so I feel I can grow as a practitioner and in my ability to help Nature to heal disease. Depending on the client’s goals, budget and time commitment we typically see results after a few visits and transition to monthly or change of season sessions. I do not



accept, or process insurance reimbursement and I have a sliding scale for services customized for each client's payment abilities.

3. How were you initially attracted to the field of Acupuncture?

After many years at Vanderbilt, I reevaluated my future in healthcare. Having worked in Critical Care/Trauma for most of my career, I was feeling that I didn't want to continue the Western Medicine route. I had experienced the loss of a close family member and began to question my deeper spiritual beliefs and to reflect on my life's purpose. I took a short leave from nursing to explore holistic healing therapies. A weekend course at the Traditional Acupuncture Institute in Columbia, Maryland introduced me to Acupuncture. The course was called "Redefining Health". It taught the layperson how to create an opening in a person by using the spoken word. After this 3-day weekend course I was so intrigued that I signed up for a yearlong course through TAI called SOPHIA (School of Philosophy of Healing in Action). I had been exposed to Chinese Philosophy through the I Ching in my undergraduate studies. Enrolling in this course enabled me to travel to the Washington State area for seasonal workshops. It was during this year that I was introduced to Five Element Acupuncture. I learned alongside practitioners of Acupuncture. These are concepts and teachings in Five Element Theory taught by JR Worsley specifically. I was hooked. Curious, intrigued and excited to take a chance in a new career provided me with new people, challenges and a way of treating and working with people in a more intimate way than afforded by Western Medicine, addressing body, mind and spirit. Certain of wanting to study the Five Element tradition, I looked for a school to meet my needs. The Worsley Institute in Miami Lakes, Florida was where I started my studies. It is now called the Academy for Five Element Acupuncture in Gainesville, Florida. The school has remained true to Five Element teachings of JR Worsley.

4. What do you specialize in as an NCCAOM National Board-Certified Acupuncturist? Is this specialization a major part of your practice?

I will always treat the patient's CF (Causative Factor) no matter the issue. I treat all energetic imbalances and I do not specialize. It has been especially rewarding to treat women with reproductive challenges and to follow them throughout their pregnancy.

5. With the NCCAOM's focus on Diversity, Equity and inclusion, do you have any experience or efforts in treating underserved communities or breaking barriers using acupuncture?



When I initially moved to Indianapolis six years ago, I worked with a yoga program that was specifically designed for veterans with PTSD. I offered auricular acupuncture before each class to any veteran or their family member who wanted to participate free of charge. I have also volunteered with a group called Floating Doctors in Panama. We treated indigenous people in a remote village off the Caribbean coast. I spent ten days on a remote island with a volunteer medical staff where I treated people using acupuncture.

6. What do you think are the most beneficial and challenging aspects of practicing acupuncture?

For me, this work is quite humbling. Total strangers divulge their thoughts and share with me who they are at a deep level. I see this as a gift and honor the courage it takes for them to open up. My background in Western medicine gives me an opportunity to refer to that modality of treatment when it is more appropriate. I am so grateful to have studied with excellent teachers and crossed paths with clients, who are my best teachers. Each person presents as a puzzle, and I am always challenged to learn more.

7. Do you think NCCAOM certification is important? Why have you maintained your NCCAOM certification?

Clients place trust in us as Chinese Medicine practitioners. NCCAOM certification is important. Every practitioner has a duty, ethical and moral, to be a responsible caregiver. This requires a set of expectations, guidelines and regulations to uphold practice standards. Chinese medicine is thousands of years old and continuing to educate we as practitioners is necessary. In one lifetime we cannot learn all there is to know about Chinese medicine, studying and learning honors the practice and is a lifelong commitment.

8. As an acupuncturist, what trends do you see happening in the future for our profession?

I would hope to see more growth and offering of Chinese medicine in our American medical system. I won't change my approach to assisting nature to heal based on thousands of years of Eastern medicine teachings. I recognize many patients who benefit from acupuncture may be unaccustomed to wellness practitioners who do not accept or process insurance claims for reimbursement. I try wherever possible to respect where my patients are financially and to present a sliding scale for services that is fair to me while ensuring a path to their recovery and wellness. Over the years patients have gone from cash and paper checks to online forms of cash payments such



as Zelle, Venmo, PayPal and Apple Pay so those are payment methods I have learned to accept and that has not created issues.

9. What are some activities you enjoy outside of work?

I spend my free time with family, staying active, long walks, travel, gardening, reading historical fiction, and keeping my eyes open for the next learning opportunity!