



NCCAOM Diplomate Spotlight: Shellie Rosen



As part of the team responsible for the NCCAOM Chinese Herbal Compounding and Safety Certificate Course, Shellie Rosen was selected for this edition of NCCAOM Diplomate Spotlight. The NCCAOM is also proud to announce the launch of the new [Diplomate Spotlight page on the NCCAOM website. Now all past Diplomate Spotlights are easily accessible in one location.](#)

It is wonderful that you are an NCCAOM National Board-Certified Acupuncturist, Tell us a little about your work in the Chinese medicine community.

The barriers that practitioners and patients face in defining the rigor that goes into professional herb-prescriptions inspired my work at the state and national levels. I studied and shared the message of Traditional Chinese Herbal Medicine (TCHM) quality with students, educators, practitioners, patients, legislators, and industry members. Over the past decade, I've taught many courses on TCHM Compounding and Dispensing. Folks have generated a passion for herb-quality as a result of our time together. We are all working together in the TCHM community to find the right balance between the art form of TCHM design and the rigor of quality and safety of prepared herbal-medicines. My work in the community has been about interjecting the conversation of quality with medical peers to increase their understanding of the products TCHM professionals prescribe to their patients. A practitioner's awareness of product quality can lead to better-informed patients and medical peers. Patient compliance begins when they commit to taking their herb-prescriptions, and it continues as the patient has faith and support in the ongoing process of herbal-therapy. The more patients understand about protections in place to guarantee their herb-formulas are free from harmful substances, the more they can participate with their TCHM practitioner.



As an NCCAOM National Board-Certified Acupuncturist, what has been your experience of using Chinese Herbs in your practice?

I began my clinical work prescribing bulk forms of Traditional Chinese herbal medicines (TCHM) along with finished products (patents). I used to love when shipments of bulk herbs arrived, and fragrances from new herbs would fill my herb pharmacy. Folks loved the look of herbs in glass jars on my shelves. Inventory, along with patient ease, led me to shift to a granule and finished product herb-pharmacy. What I treated daily as a general practitioner sometimes required formula components that I didn't have on hand. This dilemma caused me to understand better modern herb-pharmacy solutions that allowed me to design formulas for patients using external compounding services.

The recent Covid-19 disaster has shown the strength of the mail service potential for a current patient of an East Asian medical provider. These patients can receive their herb-prescription by mail without a visit to a clinic. Systems are already in place to have formulas sent directly to patients, which is a novel way to cope with this novel virus. Thanks to Chinese herbal medicine, practitioners can keep serving patients with telemedicine.

You were part of the creation of the NCCAOM Chinese Herbal Compounding Safety Certificate of Qualification (CHCS COQ). How did you become involved in the development of the CHCS COQ program?

For several years I worked collaboratively with the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA) to build the compounding and dispensing guidelines White Paper for the herb industry at large. Then I worked with the AHPA task force to prepare a version of the document for the Traditional Chinese herbal medicine (TCHM) community. I was blessed to get to work with Al Stone, a remarkable TCHM practitioner, who wrote various contributions to the guidelines. Al Stone passed away before our committee was able to publish a final draft of the Compounding and Dispensing guidelines. I think of the CHCS COQ work as part of Al's gift to our medicine before he left us for another adventure. I wanted to see the job through and



into the hands of practitioners and patients. When NCCAOM sent out a request for a volunteer practitioner interested in collaborating on a course for the community, I applied for the position.

The course was a labor of love for me and required months of meetings and devotion. I see it as an evolving body of work that will require all future generations of TCHM professionals to continue to iterate as things change in the world.

Why is the CHCS COQ program important to other NCCAOM National Board-Certified Acupuncturists?

High-quality products are associated with lower potential health risks. Products that meet the minimum standards of the Food and Drug Association's (FDA) current Good Manufacturing Practices (cGMP) are the best choices for state-licensed and nationally certified practitioners of East Asian medicine. TCHM practitioners that design herb-prescriptions for their patients based upon specific presenting patterns need support in describing the intention behind what they do.

TCHM practitioners rely on the diligence of their suppliers, along with their clinical expertise. The CHCS COQ helps to frame these professional relationships and behaviors for professional colleagues and patient communities. The recent pandemic is a painful reality of disease transmission. There is always a reason to have the most appropriate protocols in place that protect patient and practitioner communities. The NCCAOM CHCS COQ is necessary. We need this training NOW!

Do you think NCCAOM certification is important, and why?

NCCAOM has remained a dependable resource for practitioners and patients alike. NCCAOM requires that practitioners take their responsibility seriously if they place a filiform needle into a person's body, practice gua sha, and cupping, or encourage the use of TCHM's. First and foremost, NCCAOM monitors practitioners to protect patient safety, but in doing so, they also protect the brand of East Asian medicine for practitioner success. NCCAOM has been a leader in communicating the rigor of the studied practitioner through their website and community alliances. If a practitioner can certify with NCCAOM, I think it



better positions them to make professional relationships with other medical peers such as doctors and nurse practitioners. Having the certification allows practitioners to adopt the NCCAOM badge in their email signature, which can direct curious community members to a webpage detailing the significance of their extensive training. The previous CEO Dr. Kory Ward-Cook did an excellent job of ensuring that NCCAOM was nationally competitive in the way it assesses East Asian medicine practitioners. The current CEO, Mina Larson, has been with NCCAOM for 17 years and brings with her not only an incredible amount of institutional knowledge but also a passion for practitioner and patient communities that have come to know her.

Mrs. Larson demonstrated her passion when she spent time with the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA) Chinese herbal products committee to understand best how to train practitioners in compounding and dispensing. Jennifer Nemeth, NCCAOM's Director of Education & Professional Development, brought her experience of hospital risk reduction and clinical assessments to the creation of the CHCS course.

NCCAOM's board members critically reviewed the CHCS COQ from the beginning of the concept by surveying the practitioner community and garnering the experience of experts.

Teams from AHPA and NCCAOM built the CHCS COQ collaboratively. This work took years. When practitioners support NCCAOM, and when herb companies support AHPA, East Asian medicine benefits significantly by allowing practitioners to focus on treating their patients and allowing patients to have national systems in place with their safety in mind.

As an acupuncturist working with Chinese herbal supplements, what trends do you see happening in the future for our profession?

Forecasting is tricky, regardless of the business. The recent pandemic of Covid-19 has shifted the way many of us run our practices and plan for tomorrow. I'd like to imagine that as a profession, TCHM has demonstrated a capacity to have continued telemedical relationships with patients if, for any reason, they are unable to get to a clinic in person. These patients can check in with their TCHM practitioner for supportive herbal therapies through electronic media while also seeking care from a Western medical provider.



Some East Asian medical (EAM) patients are treated weekly, monthly, or several times a year.

These patients benefit from both pre-existing and ongoing supportive care that is less common in Western medical relationships. EAM practitioners can become a vital part of an early alert system for communities if practitioners continue to be on the front lines of knowledge about local and global health concerns. Practitioners that can identify the symptoms of viral contagions along with other deadly symptoms can quickly refer patients for Western medical lab testing. This swift action could play a significant role in preventing the spread of pathogens while also attending to infected patient needs early. The annual loss of human life from preventable infections is devastating.

If East Asian medical providers can learn how to react quickly when their communities or patients are in trouble, they can be crucial to saving lives. The recent changes in the way medical providers practice telemedicine can help a practitioner potentially exposed to a contagion to deliver telemedicine services to a patient still. This new opportunity can make it easier for practitioners to identify when it is a wise time for them to turn to appropriate social distancing without fear of a loss of income or patient service.

Another meaningful conversation that has resurfaced from the recent pandemic is the safety and cleanliness of products in the marketplace. Chinese herbal medicines have a history of quality successes and failures. Products that have been contaminated with toxins or drugs have entered the Chinese herbal market, causing some consumers to believe that the entire industry is unregulated and unsafe. As practitioners, we are on the front lines to clarify these misconceptions.

State-licensed and nationally certified professionals have the forum to convey information about the diligence of TCHM prescriptions. Don't wait for the patient to ask, take the CHCS COQ course, and learn about essential product quality education for patients. Pre-empt your herb-prescriptions with a quality elevator speech that relates to your unique methods of herb-prescribing and increase patient compliance through awareness.

Acupuncture settings provide a significant way to see and touch patients; Chinese herbal medicines are excellent therapies to offer when in-person contact with a patient is not an option. East Asian medical professionals that find ways to stay connected to peers and product manufacturers might best be able to feel the pulse of their medicine as it courses through the veins of modern life. These folks can adjust to new realities to serve artfully with diligence.