



T A A O M

Texas Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine



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Texas Association of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine E-Newsletter

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Welcome to the second issue of the TAAOM E-Newsletter. If you have feedback, please send it to Jeni Leans at jleans@austin.rr.com. We would like to hear from you and give your feedback to the Board of Directors.

TAAOM Board of Directors to Begin Work on Strategic Plan

At its June meeting, the TAAOM Board of Directors decided to initiate efforts to create a new strategic plan to be closely tied to the association budget. Work is underway to set up strategic planning sessions in Austin and Houston to obtain input. The strategic plan will dictate the association's future goals and objectives. Budget planning will also be taking place so that the linchpins of the strategic plan will be properly funded. The resulting strategic plan will provide guidance to the Board of Directors and the staff to more effectively address the needs of association members and the profession of acupuncture. This effort is thought to be especially timely as the TAAOM is also engaged in updating its corporate documents with the help of recently hired staff. Future editions of Enews will report on these planning efforts.

Mark Your Calendars for Annual Meeting 2011

Pursuant to the TAAOM Bylaws, the Board of Directors has begun planning for the 2011 Annual Meeting which will take place in Austin on Sunday, March 27th. This meeting will take place during the middle of the 2011 session of the Texas Legislature. It is hoped that the timing will allow for an effective grass roots lobbying effort on legislation that may be of concern during the upcoming session. Mark your calendars to attend the 2011 Annual Meeting and to make the trip to Austin even more beneficial by taking part in TAAOM advocacy efforts. Plan to participate in the member meeting, vote in TAAOM elections, socialize with colleagues, and visit legislative offices.

TSBAE Education Committee

On Friday, May 14, 2010, association representatives attended the Texas State Board of Acupuncture Examiners Education Committee Meeting as well as the TSBAE Board Meeting. The Education Committee met prior to the full Board meeting to discuss and act on requests to become approved providers of Continuing Acupuncture Education (CAE) and to approve specific courses that the agency staff did not feel comfortable with approving on their own. The committee business was generally uneventful, but significant discussion did take place about offering distance learning using a course that was already offered and approved for a live setting. The concern seemed to focus on the need for interaction during the distance learning course so that there were some assurances that educational benefits would be the same as the live offering and those licensees taking the

course would be actively participating. TAAOM representative were on hand to address these concerns by explaining mechanisms to ensure active learning when taking an online or other distance learning course.

There was additional discussion about handling biomedicine related courses in the future, and it can be anticipated that agency staff and the Education Committee will be scrutinizing these types of courses more closely due to the recent interest in these offerings. Included in committee discussion was the need to make sure the credentials of CAE providers were appropriate for the particular offering. It was also noted that approved providers will need to be establishing a track record of offering more than one course in the approved three-year period to give the agency a comfort level with the adequacy of the course offerings and justification for approved provider status.

TSBAE Board Meeting

The full Texas State Board of Acupuncture Examiners met after the Education Committee on May 14, 2010. A representative of the TAAOM was able to talk with a number of TSBAE members at the close of the meeting. Discussions with TSBAE members were predominantly about the TAAOM, the role of the new executive director for the TAAOM, and the need for legislative efforts to ensure the viability of the profession and public access to acupuncture services.

The meeting itself covered a number of topics, but of particular interest were reports on the Chiropractic Stakeholder Workgroup by TSBAE acupuncturist member Rachelle Webb who acknowledged the value of the TAAOM Executive Director and TAAOM members being present at the meeting. Suzanne Mitchell, Assistant General Counsel for the Texas Medical Board, also provided a report. Each indicated that the next step was to meet to compare qualifications and training of the two professions in regard to acupuncture, and to continue to look at ways to ensure adequate knowledge and skills while clarifying for the public the services that are actually available from the two professions. Some skepticism was expressed regarding the intent of the Chiropractic Board to legitimately address the acupuncture community's concerns. Full participation in the stakeholder process is still anticipated.

Discussion was also held on the problems surrounding use of the doctor designation under the Healing Art Identification Act. A decision was reached to post frequently asked questions (FAQs) and answers in an effort to give more guidance to licensees. Agency staff was given two projects to work on. One project is the creation of an electronic newsletter for licensees, and the other is the drafting of FAQs on the use of the doctor designation. Various other subjects were discussed and the next meeting of the TSBAE is scheduled for November 12, 2010.

Acupuncture Stakeholders Meeting

On May 18, 2010, the TSBAE held its Acupuncture Stakeholders Meeting. TAAOM member Chris Butler was in attendance as an association stakeholder representative. TAAOM Board members John Paul Liang and Will Morris were present as representatives of their respective schools. TAAOM member Dee Ann Neubold and the TAAOM Executive Director were also present along with representatives of the Texas Medical Association. Various members of the acupuncture community and agency personnel were in attendance and the Texas Medical Board Executive Director conducted the meeting.

The primary focus was on proposed changes to Rule 183.2 (Definitions) pertaining to a possible addition of language to clarify that an acupuncture needle is a solid body dry needle. There was considerable discussion of the benefits and problems of including this language in the definition of acupuncture. While it was acknowledged that the change may be beneficial in laying the groundwork for preventing physical therapists and others from performing acupuncture under the guise of dry needling, there was concern that it was somewhat limiting if the language was not styled in terms of inclusiveness.

There was additional discussion over the current statutory definition of acupuncture as reflected in the rule. The TMB Executive Director emphasized that a statutory change would be needed to address the longstanding concerns about the non-incisive insertion of needles terminology currently in the practice act definition of acupuncture. It was further noted that the acupuncture community and acupuncture associations would need to be unified in bringing a proposed statutory change to the legislature.

Ultimately, the stakeholders group reached a consensus on language for the rule that made the language defining acupuncture to be inclusive of the use of a solid body needle, but not limited solely to use of such a needle. Timelines for passage of the rule were explained including the need for TSBAE approval at its November meeting. Consequently, publication and formal comments on the rule will not be likely until November and thereafter. Due to state budget concerns, the TSBAE, like other state agencies, cancelled one meeting this year leaving only the November meeting on the calendar for the rest of 2010. An additional stakeholders meeting is still anticipated for later this summer.

The rest of the stakeholders meeting focused on a change to Rule 183.20 (Continuing Acupuncture Education), and specifically on a requirement that approved providers give at least one CAE course in each year of approved status. In addition, the subject of biomedicine was proposed to be added as one of the categories for CAE hours in keeping with Education Committee and full Board considerations of this topic. These changes appeared to be without controversy. The meeting included discussion of adding agenda items to future stakeholder meeting agendas such as problems and potential solutions surrounding the use of the doctor designation. When a date for the next stakeholders meeting is determined, notices will be sent out and the agenda will be posted on the agency website at www.tmb.state.tx.us.