



In honor of the 8th anniversary of Acupuncture’s inscription to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO’s) list of items of “Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity”, a World Acupuncture Day event was held at UNESCO’s headquarters in Paris, France on November 15th, 2018. The American Society of Acupuncturists was honored to be invited to enlighten the 1300 in attendance with a short speech on the status of acupuncture practice in the United States. The speech below was given to fulfill this aim.

For more on the inscription, please see: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/acupuncture-and-moxibustion-of-traditional-chinese-medicine-00425>

For more on World Acupuncture Day, please see: <https://www.wad-o.com/en/>

For the Facebook Live recording of this speech, please see: <https://www.facebook.com/AmericanSocietyofAcupuncturists/videos/192983441579502/>

Slide “Title: Development of Acupuncture”

Gracious UNESCO Hosts, Professor Liu Bao-yan, Professor Denis Colin, Organizing committee of World Acupuncture Day, Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues, and Friends:

It is a great honor to have this opportunity to give you a window into the status of acupuncture in the United States. In these times in particular, it is profound to have the joy of celebration for a world treasure that brings harmony and healing.

The Development and Status of Acupuncture in the United States 2018

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Slide “Birth of Acupuncture”

Acupuncture began as a formal profession back in approximately 1981 to 1982 with the founding of the fundamental organizations regulating the profession. Our organ systems. These included the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, ACAOM, which created the standards for the academic programs educating acupuncturists as a specific professional group. ACAOM is recognized and overseen by the United States Department of Education.

The Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine also came together as a formal business entity in this time, coordinating the work of the collegiate community as programs began to develop.

The National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine was also founded. NCCAOM provides psychometrically sound, nationally recognized certification testing for acupuncturists, and helps to assure minimal competency in the practice of the medicine. It cannot be stressed enough how important it is in American medical culture to have a sound credential. ACAOM and NCCAOM particularly represent milestones, in that they created the basis for an identifiable, governmentally recognizable, professional group.

The original professional association of acupuncture which was known as the American Association of Oriental Medicine, the “AAOM” (aka “double A OM”) was also formed at that time, and has undergone numerous transformations.

Birth of Acupuncture as a Profession

- ▶ **ACAOM founded 1982, purpose: accreditation of educational programs**
 - ▶ Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
 - ▶ Overseen by the U.S. Department of Education
- ▶ **CCAOM founded 1981, purpose: coordination of college activities**
 - ▶ Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
- ▶ **NCCAOM founded 1982, purpose: certification of individual acupuncturists**
 - ▶ National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine
 - ▶ Regulated by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA) of the Institution for Credentialing Excellence (ICE).
- ▶ **AAOM founded in 1982, purpose: professional association**
 - ▶ American Association of Oriental Medicine

▶ <http://www.nccaom.org/about-us/history/>

▶ <http://www.ccaom.org/pdf/AOMintheUS.pdf>

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Slide “Recent Milestone”

The acupuncture profession has grown with unprecedented speed over the past 40 years in the United States. In 2018, we achieved the milestone that our foundational structures set us in place to achieve. In 2018, the profession of “Acupuncturist” was formally recognized by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), a governmental organization that recognizes and tracks distinct professions. This recognition creates a uniquely identified, taxable and measurable, professional group. It opens doors to the inclusion of acupuncturists in numerous federal programs, including educational loan repayment programs and other opportunities.

Recent Milestone

- ▶ 2018: Recognized by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as an independent profession. Title: *Acupuncturists*

29-1291 Acupuncturists Diagnose, treat, and prevent disorders by stimulating specific acupuncture points within the body using acupuncture needles. May also use cups, nutritional supplements, therapeutic massage, acupressure, and other alternative health therapies. Excludes “Chiropractors” (29-1011). Illustrative examples: Acupuncture Physician, Licensed Acupuncturist

https://www.bls.gov/soc/2018/soc_2018_manual.pdf

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Slide “BLS Physicians”

It facilitates the professional group’s study as an economic entity, and so can help clarify data such as salary trends and legally meaningful employment numbers.

This milestone is the end result of over a decade of work which was spearheaded by the NCCAOM, especially Dr. Kory Ward Cook and Mina Larsen, and to which I had the honor of contributing along with a fine team.

The screenshot shows the Bureau of Labor Statistics website for Occupational Employment Statistics. The page title is "Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2016" for "29-1069 Physicians and Surgeons, All Other". It provides national estimates for this occupation, including employment and mean wage estimates. A table shows employment of 338,620 with a 1.2% RSE, a mean hourly wage of \$98.83, and a mean annual wage of \$205,560 with a 0.9% RSE. Below this, a percentile wage estimates table shows the 50th percentile (median) hourly wage is \$99.48 and the annual wage is \$206,920.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
BUREAU OF LABOR STATISTICS

Occupational Employment Statistics

Occupational Employment and Wages, May 2016
29-1069 Physicians and Surgeons, All Other

All physicians and surgeons not listed separately.

National estimates for this occupation: Top

Employment estimate and mean wage estimates for this occupation:

Employment (1)	Employment RSE (3)	Mean hourly wage	Mean annual wage (2)	Wage RSE (3)
338,620	1.2 %	\$98.83	\$205,560	0.9 %

Percentile wage estimates for this occupation:

Percentile	10%	25%	50% (Median)	75%	90%
Hourly Wage	\$28.41	\$57.27	\$99.48	(S)	(S)
Annual Wage (2)	\$59,090	\$119,120	\$206,920	(S)	(S)

www.asacu.org <https://www.bls.gov/oes/2016/may/oes291069.htm>

Slide “Founding of the ASA”

In 2015, the organization which I represent, the American Society of Acupuncturists, was founded. We represent a sort of budding off of an organization that was a merger with a permutation of other organizations that were rebranded and all root back to the AAOM. It is very straight forward, and likely familiar story, for those of you in professional association politics. The ASA grew, in actuality, quite organically out of nearly a decade of collaboration among state level associations representing licensed acupuncturists, and ASA as a structure represents a maturation of those relationships, and we hope an evolution in structure. Similar in form to the ETCMA, we are now a federation style organization working to represent acupuncture at state, national, and international levels.

We continue to grow as we establish infrastructure and benefits for our member associations, and currently have 27 full member associations representing approximately 4000 licensed acupuncture practitioners. We are in direct contact with virtually all other non-ethnically based acupuncture groups, meaningfully acting at the state level to affect legislation specific to the practice of “Acupuncturists” as per the new Bureau of Labor Statistics professional designation.

Founding of the American Society of Acupuncturists: 2015



27 member state associations representing about 4,000 licensed acupuncturists (or state equivalent name)

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Slide “Educational Programs”

There are currently between 56-62 independent colleges of acupuncture in the United States. These are distributed around the country in a total of 22 states, and offer a total of 95-100 different accredited or pre-accredited programs in study related to acupuncture. (These numbers change relatively rapidly and frequently still.) These programs lead to a number of different degrees, including the Master of Oriental Medicine, a Master of Acupuncture, and Doctoral level degrees. There is also a growing trend for entry level training to reach what is called “entry level doctorate” status, as has been the practice for other professions. Only a handful of schools offer this at present, but it may be the defining trend.

Educational Programs in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

- ▶ 56-62 independent institutions
 - ▶ 22 states
 - ▶ 95-100 different accredited or pre-accreditation status programs

ACAOM. (2017, Sept. 19). Enrollment in ACAOM Accredited and Pre-Accredited Programs, 2009-2017. Retrieved from <http://acaom.org/2017/09/enrollment-in-acaom-accredited-and-pre-accredited-programs-2009-2017/>

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ACAOM PROGRAM ENROLLMENT (source: annual dues invoicing)

Enrollment as of Jan. 1	Masters Dipl Acupuncture*	Masters Oriental Medicine*	Total (A+B)	Total Post Graduate Doctoral (DAOM)	Professional Doctorate**	Total Enrollment
2017			6468	532	NR	7000
2016			6891	540	NR	7431
2015			7288	483	NR	7771
2014			7889	391	---	8280
2013			7744	326	---	8070
2012	1062	6497	8099	435	---	8534
2011	1560	6421	7981	234	---	8215
2010	1984	5652	7616	251	---	7867
2009	1843	5853	7696	370	---	8066

* Masters programs were reported in aggregate from 2013 onward

** Professional doctorate enrollment was not reported via 2015-2017 dues invoicing; some PD students may be accounted as Masters students

ACAOM PROGRAM ENROLLMENT (2009-17)

Slide "Accreditation Commission"

The foundational, educational requirements for acupuncturists in the United States, are variable depending on the program degree sought. The minimal program is 1905 hours with a minimum of 3 years of study for the Master degree that includes acupuncture, but not herbal training. This degree also includes significant training in biomedicine, as well as auxiliary techniques and the core theory. The Oriental Medicine degree includes herbal medicine in the studies, and is a minimum of 2625 hours obtained over a 4-year training program. Other degrees have their own requirements, and newer degrees are in development.

Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) Entry Level Masters Degree

Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (ACAOM)

Hours/credits Program

Oriental Medicine Program

Minimum 4-Year Master degree, Diploma or certificate program

2625 Hours or 146 Credits consisting of the following breakdown:

Oriental Medicine/Acupuncture Theory = 705 Hrs. / 47 credits

Didactic Oriental Herbal Studies = 450 Hrs. / 30 credits

*Acupuncture /Chinese Herbology Clinic = 870 Hrs. / 29 credits

Biomedicine = 510 Hrs. / 34 credits

Counseling, Communications, Ethics Practice Management = 90 Hrs. / 6 credits

Acupuncture Program

Minimum 3-Year Master degree, Diploma or certificate program

1905 Hours or 105 Credits consisting of the following breakdown:

Oriental Medicine/Acupuncture Theory = 705 Hrs. / 47 credits

Acupuncture Clinic = 650 Hrs. / 22 credits

Biomedicine = 450 Hrs. / 30 credits

Counseling, Communications, Ethics, Practice Management = 90 Hrs. / 6 credits

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Many Masters programs are transitioning to "Professional Doctoral" programs

There are also "Postgraduate Doctoral" programs for education beyond the entry level degrees

Slide “National Certification”

National certification testing via the NCCAOM is recognized in almost all States aside from California, which still uses the California Acupuncture Boards; there have been a number of years of conversations underway to also recognize the NCCAOM exams. It is widely believed that having a single credential available nationwide would be of great benefit to the profession, further uniting and identifying the professional base. There is some resistance still, however, to allowing this option to California graduates, and this is one of our largest issues at the present time. The resistance to this change comes, interestingly, solely from within the acupuncture profession itself. We hope these issues will be resolved in the near future.

National Certification via the NCCAOM National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine



- 17,611 as of Sept. 30, 2018
- 30,647 individuals certified since NCCAOM inception
- Member of Institute for Credentialing Excellence
- Accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies



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 Source: <http://www.nccaom.org/state-licensure/>
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Slide “Growth of the Profession”

This study was just published and is the most thorough look at the questions of how many Licensed Acupuncturists can be identified in the U.S., and what is their distribution. The report also documents trends in the growth of the profession.

In general, numbers of presumed graduates prior to this report hovered between 28,000 to 34,000. By the look of the newest numbers of nearly 38,000 no significant decline in entry is yet clearly evident.

Key factors affecting a candidate’s interest for entry into the profession, and hence the general growth of the profession, include, but are not limited to, job prospects post-graduation, including a lack of inclusion in mainstream medical systems, under-developed integrative health systems, and the lack of residency level training opportunities. Practitioners largely still must start their own practices, demanding that they be not only physicians, but also entrepreneurs.

To remedy the business burden portion of starting practices, we are seeing an interesting growth in small to mid-sized level, private, for-profit entities, offering both franchise opportunities and employed positions for licensed acupuncturists. Whether these will ultimately be financially viable remains to be seen. There has also been a strong and stable population of “Community Acupuncturists” who use predominantly distal point treatments, provided in a group setting and offered on a sliding financial scale. This has, in some cases, very effectively expanded acupuncture accessibility into less wealthy socio-economic strata. Final problems of access remain to be solved.

Distribution of licensed acupuncturists and educational institutions in the United States at the start of 2018

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Complementary Therapies in Medicine 41 (2018) 295–301

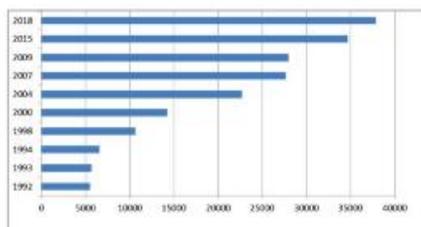


Fig. 1. The number of acupuncturists in the United States from 1992 to 2018.

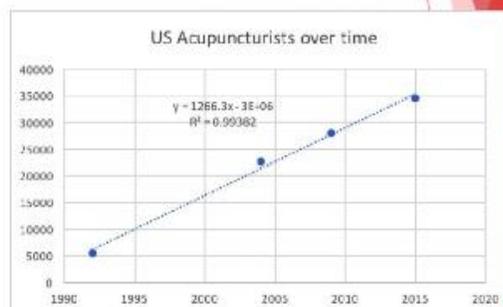


Figure 1 The number of acupuncturists in the United States from 1992 to 2015

Figure 2 Regression chart of acupuncturists in the United States from 1992 to 2015

<https://www.atcma-us.org/en/news/distribution-licensed-acupuncturists-and-educational-institutions-united-states-early-2015>

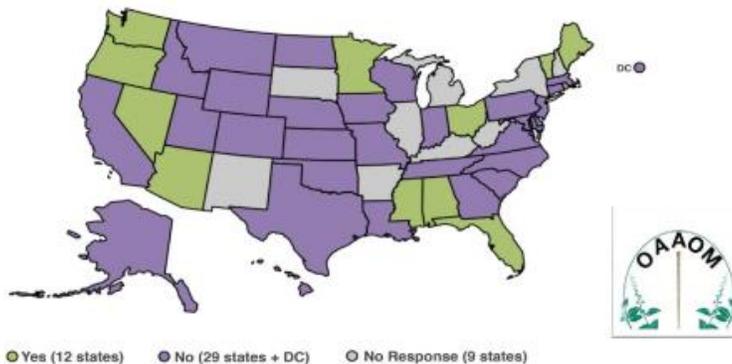
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Slide “Public Aid inclusion trends”

Acupuncture is only rarely included in most public health plans, but we have seen some significant milestones in coverage. Public aid programs in a number of states have begun to offer alternative therapies for pain management, largely pressured by the opioid crisis. These forays are frequently seen as “bold” or “dramatic”, and their stability remains highly in question by the mainstream. Nonetheless, these represent milestones in the acceptance and integration of therapies such as acupuncture as we have never seen before. They provide critical opportunities for the government and the public to become comfortable with the utilization of types of care, heretofore seen as “foreign”, and can lead to normalcy, acceptance, and acculturation of especially acupuncture. We hope, eventually, this will also lead to the greater acceptance and appreciation of Chinese medicine as a whole, including its health maintenance principles, as well as its treatment strategies. Our Ohio member association lead the way for inclusion of acupuncture in that state’s plans.

Emergence of alternative pain management strategies covered by Public Aid

Figure 1 - Survey Results: “Has your Medicaid agency implemented specific policies or programs to encourage or require alternative pain management strategies in lieu of opioids for acute or chronic non-cancer pain?”



<https://nashp.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Pain-Brief.pdf>

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*Ohio’s Medicaid department took the most **dramatic step** this month by extending coverage of acupuncture treatments delivered by non-medical providers for patients with low-back pain and migraines, a step likely to allow much greater access and attract new practitioners to the field.*

<https://www.statnews.com/2018/01/17/medicaid-opioids-alternative-medicine/>

Slide “Regulation of Acupuncture for Physicians”

Most states also regulate the practice of acupuncture by medical doctors and osteopathic doctors. Thirty-three States note acupuncture to be in scope for these professionals. In these states, it is the individual physicians' responsibility to ensure that they are appropriately trained and competent to provide acupuncture as licensed physicians. Mandated training of generally 200-300 hours is specified in another 10 States. 3 states require doctors to be trained at the same level as non-physician practitioners, and 4 states have not ruled on Medical Doctor practice.

MEDICAL ACUPUNCTURE
 Volume 29, Number 3, 2017
 © Mary Ann Liebert, Inc.
 DOI: 10.1089/acu.2017.1235

CME ARTICLE

The Regulation of the Practice of Acupuncture by Physicians in the United States

Katerina Lin, BA, and Cynthia Tung, MD, MPH

TABLE 2. ACUPUNCTURE REGULATION SUMMARY

<i>Within scope of practice for physicians</i>	<i>States</i>
Yes	AL, AK, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DE, FL, ID, IL, IN, IA, KS, KY, ME, MA, MI, MN, MO, NE, NV, NH, NC, ND, OH, OR, TN, TX, UT, VT, WA, WV, WI
Yes, with additional training	DC, GA, IA, MD, MS, NJ, NY, PA, RI, SC, VA
No	HI, MT, NM
State regulatory agency has not provided a ruling	AR, OK, SD, WY
DC, District of Columbia.	

- Within scope in 33 states
(industry standard training 200-300 hours)**
- Additional training specified in 10 states and District of Columbia (D.C.)**
- Not in scope in 3 states**
- No ruling in 4 states**

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Slide "AAMA"

Despite the variation in the entry level requirements, most physicians will opt to take at least 200 hours of training, and many go on to study acupuncture in depth, either through other North American programs, in China, or through apprenticeships. The AAMA holds an annual academic meeting each year for physicians, and this also serves as a very valuable training and professional development opportunity for this licensure group.

The introduction of acupuncture by medical doctors into hospitals and other medical settings around the United States has played a critical role in the acceptance and expansion of acupuncture practice in general. Without these professionals, acupuncture would not have achieved such great strides in such a short period of time. Our Chinese colleagues often walk between our training worlds, and have played essential roles in fostering the development of Chinese medicine for all licensure types.



- ▶ Founded in 1987
- ▶ Currently represents about 1300 physician acupuncturists
 - ▶ Roughly 8,000 - 12,000 physicians trained at the 200-300 hour entry level.
- ▶ Largest, annual professional meeting of Medical Doctor/Doctor of Osteopathy physicians practicing acupuncture in the U.S.

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Slide "Collaboration"

Just as ASA represents a federation of state associations with united purpose, so are we seeing the maturation of a number of other federation style groups. Groups such as the Integrative Healthcare Policy Consortium. Organizations such as these are achieving the levels of representation needed to be of true federal interest.

Collaboration, Unification, Collective Voice

The image displays a screenshot of the Integrative Health Policy Consortium (IHPC) website. The website header features the IHPC logo and navigation links: Home, About, Leadership, News, IHPC in Action, Partners For Health, and ConnectWithUs. A prominent yellow diamond-shaped sign reads "NEW PARADIGM AHEAD". Below this, a section titled "Strength In Numbers" states: "IHPC's Partners for Health program is made up of non-profit educational and advocacy organizations across the US. Partner health centers are working together toward a shared goal." A photograph of the US Capitol building is shown at the bottom left, with the URL www.asacu.org below it. To the right, a grid of logos represents various member organizations, including Integral, IMJUS, TSCU, Ynhip, and others. At the bottom right, the American Society of Acupuncturists logo is visible, with the URL www.asa.org.

Slide “US Dept of Veterans Affairs”

We are seeing agencies such as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs leading the call to integrative and wholistic care. The Department of Defense is also considering ways to integrate acupuncture and acupuncturists into its hospital care structure.

The screenshot displays the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs website. At the top, the VA logo and name are visible, along with a search bar and social media icons. A navigation menu includes links for Health, Benefits, Burials & Memorials, About VA, Resources, Media Room, Locations, and Contact Us. The main content area features the heading "Whole Health For Life" and a video player. The video shows a circular diagram with three overlapping circles: "EMPOWER" (Empower Whole-Systems Health), "EQUIP" (Equip Health Care), and "TRUST" (Trust Clinical Care). The diagram is surrounded by the words "Community", "Personal Health Plan", and "Whole Health". To the right of the video is a "Helpful Resources" section with a "Learn more" link. At the bottom left, the URL "www.asacu.org" is visible, and at the bottom right, a link to "https://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/" is shown.

Slide “Acupuncture’s Role”

In collaboration with a number of major Chinese groups, ASA assisted in the creation of a white paper reviewing Acupuncture’s Role in the American Opioid Epidemic. The opioid epidemic has driven intense searching for new healthcare solutions in the U.S. It is widely recognized that acupuncture is likely to play a valuable role in the effort to reduce the use of and addiction to opioids.



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Journal homepage:
www.jcimjournal.com/jim
www.elsevier.com/locate/issn/20954964
Available also online at www.sciencedirect.com.
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• Global Views

Acupuncture's Role in Solving the Opioid Epidemic: Evidence, Cost-Effectiveness, and Care Availability for Acupuncture as a Primary, Non-Pharmacologic Method for Pain Relief and Management—White Paper 2017

Arthur Yin Fan¹, David W. Miller^{2,3,4}, Bonnie Bolash⁵, Matthew Bauer^{3,5}, John McDonald^{3,6}, Sarah Faggert^{2,7}, Hongjian He^{2,8,9}, Yong Ming Li¹⁰, Amy Mateck^{8,11}, Lindy Camardella^{2,2}, Mel Hopper Koppelman¹², Jennifer A.M. Stone^{2,13}, Lindsay Meade^{1,3}, John Pang¹⁴

Slide “US HR 6”

And just last month, as of October 24th, in keeping with these trends, U.S. HR 6 was signed into law. This document is primarily a call for study on ways our Medicare and Medicaid services can improve care related to opioids and pain, but is the first document of its type and at this level to mention acupuncture. It is another small but truly monumental achievement.

One Hundred Fifteenth Congress
of the
United States of America

AT THE SECOND SESSION
*Began and held at the City of Washington on Wednesday,
the third day of January, two thousand and eighteen.*

An Act

To provide for opioid use disorder prevention, recovery, and treatment, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Substance Use-Disorder Prevention that Promotes Opioid Recovery and Treatment for Patients and Communities Act” or the “SUPPORT for Patients and Communities Act”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents of this Act is as follows:

► U.S. HR 6 - The report will include information on treatments both currently covered and those not covered. It will also include information on barriers to access, cost-benefit ratios, and information on practices such as acupuncture (6086 C2B), therapeutic massage, and items and services furnished by integrated pain management programs.

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/6/text>

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Slide “Outlook”

Overall, we must be able to appreciate how profoundly positive the trend for acupuncture’s inclusion into the U.S. healthcare system appears to be at present. All indicators point towards greater and greater acceptance and utilization. There are still significant challenges to the acceptance of, or even foundational appreciation for, the rich cultural treasure that is the totality of Chinese medicine. However, with the phenomenal growth that we have seen over the past approximately 40 years for the profession, I am optimistic that a greater appreciation will most certainly emerge.

Outlook

- ▶ **Profoundly positive for acupuncture as a modality.**
- ▶ **Positive with significant challenges for Chinese medicine as a complete system, as well as for *Acupuncturists* as a professional group.**
 - ▶ **Changing terrain for herbal medicine**



Slide "Thank You"

Thank you!



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