

Acupuncturists In Their Own Words

ASA Survey Series Results



American Society[™]
of Acupuncturists

www.ASAcu.org

Survey Statistics:

ASA Created a 5 Question Survey that was placed in both the February edition of the Newsletter and emailed directly on 3/2/2018. The questions were open-ended and a collaboration by ASA and AAC.

The Survey was closed on 3/7/2018.

Direct Email went out to 4929 people.

26.4% Open Rate (1275 Unique Opens on the Direct Email)

0.18509804 (236) Clicked On Survey

156 Anonymous Responses to the Direct Email.

4 Responded to ASA Directly (therefore not anonymous.)



Q1: Are you a member of your state association?
Please elaborate on why or why not.

Yes

- Duty: Professional Responsibility
- Support and Protect Acupuncture
- Promotion of Acupuncturists
- Receive Information
- Lobbying & Legal Battles
- Continuing Education
- Networking
- Advertising

No

- Lack of Transparency
- Lack of Support
- Lack of Leadership
- Lack of Relevance
- Lack of Organization
- Lack of Unity
- Philosophical Differences
- Cost Prohibitive

In Their Own Words: Yes I am. It's what you do as a Professional.

- ▶ Yes. Because I feel I owe it to the profession. It's been difficult recently, since I haven't agreed with where they focus their efforts. But I've been involved with the state association since I became licensed - a long time ago - and I will do my best to influence it for good.
- ▶ Yes. I see it as paying my small portion to support they work they do for me and my profession. It's like association fees at a condo building. I don't want to sweep the halls and cut the grass. So we all chip in a little and hire someone to do it. No acupuncturist wants to read all the impending legislation, orient new members, or put on CEU events. So we all chip in a little to pay for a professional association to do that for us.
- ▶ Yes, I am a member. I joined to encourage my students to get involved. I used to teach at a local acu school whose administration neither supports/advocates for students or the profession. As I got more involved, it quickly became clear that the state association is the only thing that keeps this profession moving forward in this state. I wanted to help with that progress.
- ▶ Yes, I have been on the board for 4 years now. I believe we need more activists in our profession and we need more people from our profession that will train new members to fill the boards to sustain our existence in the professional market. You cant serve one term and just leave you need to mentor new board of directors. So I am a mentor.
- ▶ Yes. I became a member years ago when one of my former teachers asked me to. I stayed a member when I realized that's what professionals do. They give money and time to promote their profession.
- ▶ Yes. I have worked in medicine/health care for 37 years. In many western medical professions, it is expected (maybe even required?) to belong to your state and national associations. In my mind, it is a given that I would belong to state and national acupuncture associations, just as I have with state/national associations in my prior profession!
- ▶ Yes, I am. I like to belong to the professional organization that represents my career interests at the state and national levels. Although I am not always able to attend meetings, I still feel that giving money through dues is an appropriate way to demonstrate support too.
- ▶ Yes! Acupuncture's popularity and usefulness are growing at a high rate. We need to maintain that momentum, in order to benefit our patients and our profession. The strongest way to do that is to join and support our state and national professional associations. Active membership means participating on committees and work groups and boards. These are great ways to steer the profession. Passive membership means financially supporting the associations and sharing your thoughts with the leadership and fellow acupuncturists. Passive membership is a great way to support the profession.



In Their Own Words: Yes. It's very important as acupuncturists to be represented and protected by this state association. We are nothing without it!

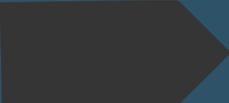
- ▶ Yes I am a member of my state association. To help support the group to move the profession forward with dealing with legislation.
- ▶ Yes. To stay informed about acupuncture in my state and to be in communication with acupuncturists here.
- ▶ Yes- Because I want the public to know about the benefits of acupuncture. We need a group of members who can focus on informing the public and progress the profession. I'm happy to financially support the hard work that needs to and is getting done.
- ▶ Yes - I wouldn't be able to practice the way I do now in my state if it weren't for all the effort of our association to affect legislation and our practice act.
- ▶ Yes. I'm very appreciative of the work that our state board does. We need to have a presence, ideally with a united voice, to effect change.
- ▶ Yes. I get information and discounts on continuing education and the assn. keeps me updated on the politics of our profession

In Their Own Words: No...And Let Me Tell You Why...

- No, they do not represent the views of the average acupuncturist.
- No. Because I have repeatedly tried to contact my states board president to discuss how they are spending their money. The president has no desire to listen to their constituents or hear concerns from their state. Each time I have a concern I am never listened to. They only ask for my money. I even asked for help with a cease and desist and my concerns were never addressed.
- Not Anymore. The State Association did not serve the Acupuncture community in it's concerns. I volunteer for the board to try and change that but I found that the Executive Director was the reason nothing was happening. Today it lacks effective leadership. In 2016 the leadership was so ineffective they were not able to conduct a full meeting or reactivate their committees. The President is focused on students not professional nor the profession.
- No I am not a member currently. The association isn't pursuing issues I find relevant and important to the future of our profession like expanding scope and embracing modernization and integration of acupuncture into the current medical paradigm. That absence is leaving space for other professions to fill in the blanks. Lack of modernization means less opportunities for graduates and finally; neither national organizations of the past nor the state association has done anything to prominently promote Acupuncture to the consumers and advertise our presence.
- No. The cost is prohibitive and I honestly don't think it has much relevance in advancing our interests and lobbying for effective change.
- No. Their focus and goals aren't the same as mine. For example, they spent a lot of money on keeping Physical Therapists from dry needling. I don't care if PTs dry needle. It's not acupuncture.
- I am not a member of my state association. I tried. But found it not to be a functioning organization. They seem unable to create and sustain any vision. A number of efforts were started and abandoned. I finally simply didn't want to be associated with them.
- No. I haven't found that I've been able to really connect with those who are involved in the state association. They seem to have their own agenda which may or may not welcome the input of those who may not share the same viewpoints as they do.

I Am Not Currently A Member and Here is Why:

- **No Transparency.** There was financial corruption within my state association a few years back, but nobody seems to have addressed it or thought to increase transparency. It's like a stepchild nobody talks about and we're just supposed to pretend it didn't happen.
 - **Philosophical Differences.** More money seems to be spent on fear-based causes such as lobbying and attorneys to 'protect the profession' or 'advocate for the profession', fighting for more 'respect' or increasing the 'value', or 'status' of the profession (measured in terms of how much we charge or whether insurance covers acupuncture) instead of compassion-based missions such as increasing access to acupuncture for those who can't afford it otherwise.
 - **The focus seems** to be placed more on making Chinese Medicine even more of an upper-middle class commodity (the ultimate dream being called 'doctor; and having a parking space in every hospital staff parking lot) instead of being a medicine/profession that serves the vast majority of people. Ming vase vs. water bucket. White coat vs carhartts.
 - **Cost.** The state association fees seem to benefit lawyers more than they benefit the profession or our patients.
- 1. I was a member but my membership lapsed and I didn't get any reminders for renewal. I was also dropped from their mailing list for some reason, so I no longer got emails from them and they pretty much fell off my radar.
 - 2. My husband is also an acupuncturist and we are in business together. We have struggled financially for the past 10 years, as we came into this profession with no business background, no money and an enormous amount of student loan debt. This past year we filed for bankruptcy and quite frankly there was not a spare penny to spend on professional memberships.
 - 3. When I do catch a glimpse of what the association is working on it seems largely concerned with promoting insurance coverage. Having spent 6 years accepting insurance I am concerned that reimbursement rates are far too low considering the cost of this education (let alone the service and time we provide for patients). I see no efforts to correct this.



A View of
One State:
What its
L.Acs think
of the
association

01

No. *** has had so many associations and they never accomplish anything.**

02

No. The state of ** is full of vastly different ideological groups that do not communicate with each other and membership in one group alienates one from contact with other groups. I'm very concerned about the future of our profession in this state, yet unwilling to take part in inter-association bickering.**

03

There is no association in ***.**



A Note to ASA Regarding State Assns: Am I a member?

- ▶ Not currently, although I have been for most of my career including board memberships and other activities. As state associations moved resources toward protecting out scope of practice (a meaningless battle in my opinion) and away from promoting the importance of the medicine itself and defending our ability to use herbs, I retained national membership only. Now, that's not much of an option. I used to belong to two associations, then only one as I discontinued in one state. At this point I am transitioning back into that state and intend to join the state association again. **Honestly, I was also not happy about the sudden and aggressive takeover by ASA and have been waiting for the dust to clear and see where we now. I am gaining confidence in this new path (not completely sold on it yet) and do intend to become a state association member again.**



Q2 & 4: What do you expect from a state association? From a national association?

- Advocacy
- Professional Support
- Accessibility
- Information
- CEUs
- Public Awareness Campaigns
- Unity & Organization
- Leadership
- “Benefits” (A Range of Things)

- Advocacy
- Support of State Associations
- Accessibility for practitioners
- Information
- High Quality CEUs
- Public Awareness Campaigns
- Unified Voice
- “A Seat at the Table”
- Protection of Industry



In Their
Own
Words:
State
Advocacy
Desires

Get the worker's compensation law passed.

Work on getting us accepted as primary care.

Legalized recognition of acupuncture in medicare and veterans administration hiring Acupuncturist at the Graduate level salary and position and using only qualified acupuncture in the veterans healthcare system.

(Fight) Dry needling and Medical Acupuncture performed by untrained physical therapist, massage therapist, trainers, chiropractors and medical doctors

Formation of an advocacy network of Acupuncturist to attending meetings with law makers to create the needed legislation and letter writing campaigns

I expect them to protect and expand the practice of acupuncture.

Watchdogging the acupuncture schools, since we have allowed them to be "for profit" rather than run as any other higher education degree program. (This is a SERIOUS problem, preventing us from being respected by the medical profession.)

In Their Own Words: National Advocacy

- I expect the national association be in charge of national/federal issues such as expanding our scope of practice, making our education requirements throughout all states more uniform. I expect they take or head up research that can help move our field forward (like getting acupuncturists employed by hospitals).
- National support. Lobbying and negotiating with Congress, focusing on the big picture. And supporting State orgs that are working to improve acupuncture laws & regs in their state.
- Standard legislative language for all states
- You need to introduce legislation that makes Acupuncture a choice before Opioids are given. Do no harm type of legislation!!!
- The same things as from state associations but on a national scale and particularly in the broader areas of malpractice insurance, acceptance of health care insurance, educational standards and degrees, and leading the fight for acceptance, safety standards and legality of Chinese herbs by properly trained herbologists (as determined currently by NCCAOM). Also to maintain the rough equivalency of licensure requirements in all states with a long term goal of a national license (with perhaps certifications still required from individual states as they will never agree to give up fees, but doing away with the variety of standard requirements and tests should be doable).



Something to Think About:

- ▶ I expect there to be a discussion about where the state's members would like to spend their time, money and resources. I also expect them to address my concerns about legal matters and respond in a timely manner. **This is the first and only place I have been able to submit (written) my concerns with the state and national association. My state association has never asked if they can do anything to improve or opened a discussion.**



ASA Considerations: What do you expect from a national association?

No idea anymore. The national association has changed names so many times that I can't keep track and I've read such negative articles about its board and management, within the last several years, that quite frankly I'm not sure I have any faith or trust in the association. I'm not even sure how this association I'm writing for relates to the past association. At both the state and national level there is a lack of consistency as leadership changes from year to year--and I think this is really problematic for its members--it's like a new association every time leadership changes.

oh, i dunno, i suppose at this point i'd be willing to settle for just something good...

Lack of Insurance
Reimbursement:
Private, Medicare,
Medicaid

Dry Needling &
Infringement of
other Health
Professions

Lack of Unity:
Infighting and
Bickering

Lack of Presence:
Lobbying

Lack of Branding &
Messaging: Public
Awareness
Campaigns

Lack of
Employment
Opportunities

Lack of
Mainstream
Medical
Opportunities

Lack of Consistent
Educational
Standards

Q3: What do you feel are the major issues the Acupuncture Industry faces?



In Their Own Words: Problems the Industry Faces

- Too many strongly held positions without understanding the impacts of those positions. Antagonistic relations with other professions. Antagonistic relations within subsets of the profession. Ever increasing educational and credentialing demands without recognition of the negative impacts they bring. Too much bitterness and selfishness.
- As a whole, we completely dropped the ball in regards to dry needling. We need to claim the term and if need be learn what they're offering that's different.
- We simply don't make enough money to be financially viable, particularly with our loan burden. There are not nearly enough career options that would lift us out of that. I have seen no change in that since my student days. And we still don't have a seat at the adult table in terms of the medical establishment in this country. We can't compete with the AMA or any of the other powerful institutions Western medicine possesses.
- Not speaking with a united voice. We're fractured. There are several national acupuncture organisations. In fact, I wasn't initially certain ASA was an association for LAc's. I thought it might be an org for "medical acupuncturists".
- The major issues are Public Relations and providing an alternative to the negative aspects of Western Medicine. We need to focus more on networking with other like-minded professional healers, including chiropractors, MD's, Massage Therapists, Nutritionists, Life-Counselors, O.T.'s and Dentists. If we're spending all our energy fighting Chiropractors and P.T.'s, we won't have any time left over to combat those things which actually undermine people's health, like drugs and unnecessary surgeries.

Q5: Where Do You Practice?

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, & Wyoming

