

NCCAOM ASA Town Hall

Medicare Update

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Questions were submitted at the Town Hall and post Town Hall to
townhall@thenccaom.org.

They were answered on May 1, 2022 by:

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[Town Hall recording](#)
[Power Point Slides](#)

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Medicare Advocacy Q&A

Are we going to have the same drawbacks chiropractors deal with?

For example, will PT be considered dry needling and get paid more than LicAc.? As ODs with spinal manipulations... Also, if passed, will my Master's degree get included or only DAOM as with research?

Answer: It's important to remember that the federal effort to obtain Medicare recognition for acupuncturists is very narrow--it just secures provider status for acupuncturists. It does not address, establish, or change billing/coding rates or processes of acupuncturists or other providers. That advocacy is necessary regardless of whether acupuncturists have Medicare recognition, but it is separate to provider-status effort. Provider status will enable acupuncturists to protect their scopes by filling the provider gap that currently exists among Medicare beneficiaries who are seeking acupuncture services and looking to anyone who can provide it. If this legislation becomes law, acupuncturists will need to be licensed.

Are we only working toward pain?

The worksheet seems to not consider anxiety, insomnia, digestion, etc.

Answer: Currently, Medicare only covers acupuncture services for chronic lower back pain. Because of this focus, advocacy efforts seek to demonstrate the evidence base for acupuncturists providing relief for chronic pain. It is likely that Medicare will continue to expand services and cover other applications, which is why it's so important for acupuncturists to obtain Medicare recognition ahead of Medicare service expansion.

Can we get more information about the actual bill?

and how it would affect us, our reimbursement, the pre-authorizations, the paperwork required if it passes.

Answer: The bill does not address billing, coding, reimbursement, preauthorization, or required enrollment paperwork. It would just give acupuncturists Medicare provider-status. Once the bill becomes law, the ASA and the NCCAOM would work with the Medicare program to finalize rules and regulations pertaining to this law. The rulemaking process would establish processes and guidance for acupuncturist enrollment into the Medicare program.

Brenda, can you share what about the Bill that you learned that made you want to support it?

Brenda, you mentioned you looked at the bill and learned more what it is about.

Answer: Thank you for asking this very important question. Like a lot of acupuncturists, I get mired in the day to day and do not keep up with industry politics. Having so many potential patients call me for acupuncture services covered by Medicare, I was very familiar with Medicare and it's limitations for treating patients with lower back pain. I was oblivious to what was going on to rectify this governmental oversight. It's government - why would they want to change things to include acupuncturists? Along comes one of my patients who ordered herbs that I prescribed. They had sent her a survey to fill out and she told me that it seemed more like a survey that I should fill out, not her. So, she sent it to me. The survey was asking about how I felt about this Medicare policy. Finally - someone I could gripe to! Because I don't like the idea of being able to help someone, but not being able to because of a government policy. After filling out the survey, that is when Molly contacted me. Everything was a bit over my head, so I thought to myself "who do you know that has a better handle on these things than I do?" I talked to my own acupuncturist, Cara Frank as well as Amy Mager, who I have enormous respect for and knew her acupuncture advocacy history. They both were very generous in explaining the politics behind the H.R. 4803 Bill and that I should talk from my heart when faced with Brian Fitzpatrick's office, which I did. What made me support the bill and advocate for it was knowing how much acupuncture has helped and can help patients with lower back pain. I also treat several patients who are addicted to opioids because of either back pain or another injury. Both things can give life altering experiences to most of the elderly who suffer in our country. This population is also the least able to afford acupuncture and having Medicare coverage by the people who are most trained to do so, is a game changer. I hope that answers your question.

Can you explain the text campaign more?

I'm not clear what happens when you text that number with your type of category ie acupuncturist, ally, etc.

Answer: Once you send one of the keywords to 52886, you will receive a text message with a link. Once you click on the link, you will be taken to a page that has an email composed to your Representative's office that encourages support for H.R. 4803. You may customize this email, or you may send it as is. Once you

click send, the platform will send an email to your Representative's office. The platform will then give you the option of tweeting your Representative. If you decide to tweet, the campaign will take you to the twitter message for you to review and send. Once you send a tweet, you are done. If you do not want to send a tweet after sending an email, you can decline or simply exit the program. Either way, your email will be sent, and you are done.

Can you please tell me if there is an opt-out clause in this bill?

Answer: The bill will enable acupuncturists who do not wish to participate in Medicare to opt out of the program. Once the bill becomes law, acupuncturists who do not wish to participate will receive more information about opting out of the program.

Has anyone thought of writing the local newspaper in the republican districts to get the word out faster to patients and supporters of acup?

Answer: Yes--we are working with acupuncturists within Republican districts to raise awareness of this bill on the local level. If you are in a Republican district and would like to write an op-ed for a local paper or get involved in other ways, please let us know: advocacy@thenccaom.org.

Do the meetings have to be virtual?

Answer: Right now, yes, all ASA/NCCAOM Hill meetings are virtual. This is largely due to current visitor constraints on Capitol Hill.

I see pediatric and adolescent patients many who are on Medicaid, are their testimonials still something you would like or still helpful in contacting their representative?

Answer: Yes--every patient testimony is valuable and important. Please consider helping in this way. The ASA website provides extensive guidance on approaching your patients about providing these testimonies.

How do i register for the summer push?

Answer: Thank you for your interest in our Summer Push! You can sign up directly here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/5D8DLLC> or simple contact advocacy@thenccaom.org to register.

How do we get the taxonomy changed as it is designated at the level of a technician?

Answer: This effort is outside of the scope of H.R. 4803, which just focuses on obtaining Medicare-provider status for acupuncturists.

How many total democrats are signed on for the bill now?

Answer: As of April 27, there are currently 10 Democrats and 1 Republican.

I am also aware of this occurring, wondering what the thoughts of the NCCAOM are?

<https://peoplesworld.org/article/wall-street-moves-to-privatize-medicare/>

Answer: The core of the Medicare program will remain intact, regardless of privatization debates. The program only continues to grow, which is more reasons why the ASA/NCCAOM effort to obtain Medicare-provider recognition is critical to the future of the profession.

Might HR 4803 have a better chance of success after the election if the Republicans regain Congress?

I see the media expecting many Democrats to lose their offices in the next election.

Answer: The likelihood of the bill advancing under a Republican majority will depend on the amount of Republican support we obtain. With the Republican party poised to take the majority in 2023, the bill will need as many Republicans as possible to increase its chances of advancing in the 118th Congress. That's why securing Rep. Fitzpatrick (R-PA) as a co-sponsor this year was a critical to ASA/NCCAOM's strategy.

Is there a way to make your google form a public form?

The link to the Google form requires the patient to be logged in as a Google account at this time.

Answer: Google has changed its requirements when using Google Forms to allow users without a Gmail account. The settings on this form should allow any user to use the form. An email address is required to complete the form, but it is not limited to Gmail users.

Is the text for students not working properly?

I sent “student” to 52886 but no response. But when I added updates, I got automated message right away.

Answer: The student campaign is active, so we recommend trying again. You should receive a text with a link, which will take you to the student email. If you still don't receive a response, contact us here: advocacy@thenccaom.org.

If we become a provider can we offer services if the bill hasn't passed?

I thought that some practitioners were already providing acupuncture under Medicare.

Answer: Medicare currently allows physicians, PAs, NPs, to provide acupuncture services for cLBP. Acupuncturists currently cannot provide these services because acupuncturist do not yet have Medicare provider status. H.R. 4803 would grant acupuncturists Medicare-provider status, which would enable them to provide these services to Medicare beneficiaries.

Is there someone whom could I speak about government relations and the current landscape and our grassroots campaign?

I understand NCCAOM is using Capital Canary for their public policy software.

Answer: Feel free to email advocacy@thenccaom.org.

In this bill, is there an opt-out clause?

Many of us have no desire to deal with the paperwork and bureaucracy.

Answer: If this bill becomes law, acupuncturists who do not wish to enroll in Medicare will have the ability to opt-out of the program.

How can I help?

My representative recently died, and we don't have a stand-in until the special election.

Answer: You can still collect patient testimonials and raise awareness of the bill with your colleagues, patients, and community members. If residents within your district are informed and eager to support this bill, you will have a good message to take to your new Representative.

Can you please guide me to what they can do to help most effectively?

My Uncle is a Radiologist in a red district in FL. He is a supporter. My mother is a pharmacist and works for the VA and is a huge fan and Medicare member.

Answer: There are a lot of great ways our acupuncture allies can support this bill. Please feel free to email advocacy@thenccaom.org for more information.

Please do tell us the technicalities of the bill?

Answer: This bill is very simple and focused. H.R. 4803 would authorize the Medicare program to recognize acupuncturists as Medicare providers. Provider status is necessary to provide care to Medicare beneficiaries without supervision. This status would enable licensed acupuncturists to provide acupuncture services that Medicare covers to all Medicare beneficiaries. That's all the bill does. It does not expand services or address billing/coding/reimbursement policy. Please feel free to email advocacy@thenccaom.org if you have additional questions about the bill.

Are we telling our senior patients to find an MD to provide acupuncture for them in the meantime?

Answer: No. Acupuncturists are the most appropriate practitioner to provide acupuncture services. If you have an established business relationship with a physician who is willing to supervise you in accordance with Medicare rules, you may provide services to Medicare beneficiaries. Current policy places a barrier to acupuncture services, which is why it's so important to pass this legislation.

What is phone 2 action?

Answer: Phone2Action (now called Capitol Canary) is the advocacy platform that ASA/NCCAOM uses to link advocates with their Members of Congress. The ASA/NCCAOM currently runs several campaigns through the platform that allows acupuncturists, students, patients, senior citizens, and acupuncture allies to contact their U.S. Representatives about H.R. 4803.

What is the length or duration of congressional meetings?

Answer: Congressional meetings to support H.R. 4803 last between 20-30 minutes.

What is the time commitment for the training that starts in June?

Answer: The time commitment for training will be 60 minutes.

What Republican congressperson signed on?

Answer: Representative Brian Fitzpatrick from Pennsylvania.

What was that contact email?

Answer: advocacy@thenccaom.org or advocacy@asacu.org

Where can patients get financial assistance for acupuncture?

Some people have no health insurance.

Answer: Public assistance for acupuncture services may depend on your state. Medicare often covers acupuncture services, but individuals need to qualify based on poverty level and enrollee in the program. Most programs such as Medicaid are state based, so policies and resources vary.

Where can we find a list of supporters of HR4803?

Answer: As of April 27:

- Rep. Cellie Pingree [D-ME-1]
- Rep. Joe Neguse [D-CO-2]
- Rep. Grace Meng [D-NY-6]
- Rep. Grace Napolitano [D-CA-32]
- Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton [D-DC-At Large]
- Rep. Thomas Suozzi [D-NY-3]
- Rep. Barbara Lee [D-CA-13]
- Rep. Earl Blumenauer [D-OR-3]

Rep. Jimmy Panetta [D-CA-20]

Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick [R-PA-1]

Where can we find the fact sheet?

Answer: The H.R. 4803 Fact Sheet is available on [NCCAOM Website](#) and [ASA Website](#).

Why not offer a cash rate, right now?

A cash discount may be equitable to what Medicare would pay.

Answer: That may be seen by some as a short-term solution, but obtaining Medicare recognition will have long-lasting, permanent benefits for the profession such as HHS grants, student loan-forgiveness, and increased access to patients. Medicare recognition will also help acupuncturists protect their scope of practice as many practitioner groups seek to expand. Lastly, many Medicare beneficiaries are on fixed incomes and do not want to/cannot pay cash for services that are already covered by Medicare. Even at a discounted rate, cash payments would still be more than what beneficiaries would receive if they received acupuncture services from another eligible provider type.

Will you please provide the link to HR 4803?

Answer: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/4803/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22hr+4803%22%2C%22hr%22%2C%224803%22%5D%7D&r=1&s=2>