



NGAOM

National Guild of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine
OPEIU Guild Local 62, AFL-CIO



Office & Professional Employees International Union, OPEIU Guild 62, AFL-CIO, CLC
www.ngaom.org

February 3, 2015

Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT

RE: HB-5359

Dear Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

I am writing this letter in support of HB-5359 which is presently before the Connecticut General Assembly. This bill will require health insurance coverage for services rendered by an acupuncturist to the same extent coverage is provided for services rendered by a physician.

I am the Vice President of the Washington State chapter of the National Guild of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NGAOM). Our Guild 62 is a member of the Office and Professional Employees International Union, which is a member of the AFL-CIO. I am a doctor of acupuncture and Oriental medicine (DAOM) with 10 years of clinical experience. I also chair the newly formed Acupuncture Science and Research Committee under the American Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Association (AAAOM)

Acupuncture is a minimally invasive procedure whereby small-diameter (0.16-0.30mm) filiform needles are inserted into the body in order to manipulate subcutaneous neural, muscular, and vascular tissues in order to effect a number of therapeutic physiological changes. The physiological model of acupuncture has more than three decades of basic-science research supporting it. Therapeutic acupuncture has about fifteen years of high-quality effectiveness and efficacy data. Acupuncture has been recommended in the American College of Physicians/American Pain Society's clinical practice guidelines for low-back pain as a non-pharmacological therapy since 2007.¹ This inclusion was based on high-quality evidence at that time supporting acupuncture as a cost-effective way to treat pain more successfully than with standard care alone. The evidence supporting acupuncture has only grown since 2007.

The cost-effectiveness of acupuncture in the treatment of several common pain conditions was demonstrated by a very large high-quality systematic review of cost-effectiveness by Kim et al.² In this systematic review evaluated cost-effectiveness analyses (CEA), cost-utility analyses (CUA), and cost-benefit analyses (CBA) alongside randomized controlled trials in order to assess the consequences and costs of acupuncture for a variety of medical conditions in a diverse multinational population. Equally powerful studies have found acupuncture to be a cost-effective option for chronic neck pain,³ and primary headache.⁴ The research literature has shown acupuncture to be a cost-effective option for treating several of the most common pain conditions.

Besides being cost-effective, acupuncture often outperforms standard care for many conditions. Vickers et al demonstrated, in 2012, acupuncture's effectiveness in a variety of chronic pain conditions (back and neck pain, osteoarthritis, and chronic headache) in one of the largest meta-analyses of individual patient data to date (n=17,922).⁶ This study corroborates several large randomized controlled trials showing acupuncture effectiveness in treating chronic pain. A very large, very high-quality multicenter German trial of 1,162 patients demonstrated that acupuncture was nearly twice as effective at treating low-back pain compared to standard care.⁷

The NGAOM and AAAOM work tirelessly to ensure that every licensed acupuncturist provides quality evidence-based medical care in every state. Please support this bill and help us deliver that care to your state too.

Most sincerely,



Jacob Godwin, DAOM, LAc

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