



**CONNECTICUT SOCIETY OF ACUPUNCTURE AND ORIENTAL MEDICINE**

**HB 5359 AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR SERVICES RENDERED BY ACUPUNCTURIST**

**Testimony of Karen Borla, LAc, President, the Connecticut Society of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (CSAOM.org)**

**Insurance and Real Estate Committee Public Hearing February 5, 2015**

**Dear Senator Crisco, Representative Megna, Senator Kelly, Representative Sampson, and Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:**

I'd like to thank the Committee for raising HB 5359. The Connecticut Society of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine is working to improve the well being of people seeking healthcare in Connecticut

**The Connecticut Society of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (CSAOM) is in support of HB 5359 AN ACT CONCERNING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR SERVICES RENDERED BY ACUPUNCTURIST.**

CSAOM has 56 active, professional members who are licensed in Connecticut, and 8 student members. Our members have practices throughout the state and serve thousands of Connecticut residents with this important medicine.

We believe HB 5359 will make acupuncture more readily acceptable to patients who want it, and there are many. Some of them hold back from receiving treatments since that are not covered under their insurance plans. Others are surprised to find out that while they do have acupuncture coverage, they cannot see a licensed acupuncturist and receive in-network benefits. They are instead required to see an M.D. or chiropractor who in most cases does not have the same training as a licensed acupuncturist. This bill would go far to remedy this type of problem in a fair and equitable way through providing parity to licensed acupuncturists.

We wish to underscore the health and cost benefits of acupuncture for our patients. Acupuncture is now being mainstreamed into hospital programs, 40% of self-insured plans, workman's compensation coverage, and VA benefits. We believe insurance companies are increasingly aware of the actuarial studies and numerous independent randomized studies that show the cost benefit of acupuncture compared to conventional medicine.

Recently, 4 states included acupuncture in their Essential Health Benefits (EHB) plans: Washington, California, New Mexico, and Alaska. In addition, Washington State passed a comprehensive providers' parity statute.

Thank you for your consideration of our testimony on behalf of the members of CSAOM.

Sincerely,

**CSAOM Board of Directors**

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