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# HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(11)

Date Referred: May 2, 1989

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Date of Committee Action: 5/6/89

The FINANCE Committee considered:

CSSB 134 (L&C) am

~~CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 134 (L&C) am~~

"An Act relating to the practice of acupuncture."

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

- be replaced with \_\_\_\_\_  the same title  
 a new title  
 have attached amendment(s)  
 do pass  
 do not pass  
 no recommendation  
 individual recommendations  
 additional referral to the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee

ADOPTS: \_\_\_\_\_ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(s):  
(Dept)

APPROVES PREVIOUS:

(Date/Dept)

- fiscal impact \_\_\_\_\_  
 zero fiscal note \_\_\_\_\_  
 zero with analysis \_\_\_\_\_

- fiscal note(s) CEP 3/28/89  
 zero fiscal note(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
 zero fn/analysis \_\_\_\_\_

### SIGNING DO PASS:

### SIGNING:

(Check approp. column)

Do Not Pass No Rec Amend

Cl Swackhammer Swackhammer  
W Koponen Koponen  
H Olmer Olmer  
R Barnes Barnes  
D Shultz Shultz  
R E Phillips Phillips  
K Wallis Wallis  
J Brown Brown

|  | Do Not Pass | No Rec | Amend |
|--|-------------|--------|-------|
|  |             |        |       |
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Cl Swackhammer vice chair  
Chairman's Signature

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Title: An Act relating to the practice of acupuncture.  
Sponsor: Duncan  
Requester: L&C Committee

Agency Affected: Commerce & Econ. Dev.  
BRU: Occupational Licensing  
Components: Admin. & Boards

EXPENDITURES / REVENUES : (Thousands of Dollars)

| OPERATING         | FY 89 | FY 90 | FY 91 | FY 92 | FY 93 | FY 94 |
|-------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| PERSONAL SERVICES | 0     | 2.9   | 2.9   | 2.9   | 2.9   | 2.9   |
| TRAVEL            | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| CONTRACTUAL       | 0     | 1.1   | 1.1   | 1.1   | 1.1   | 1.1   |
| SUPPLIES          | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     | 0     |
| EQUIPMENT         |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| LAND & STRUCTURES |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| GRANTS, CLAIMS    |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| MISCELLANEOUS     |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| TOTAL OPERATING   | 0     | 4.0   | 4.0   | 4.0   | 4.0   | 4.0   |

|         |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CAPITAL | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|

|         |   |     |   |     |   |     |
|---------|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|
| REVENUE | 0 | 4.0 | 0 | 4.0 | 0 | 4.0 |
|---------|---|-----|---|-----|---|-----|

FUNDING: (Thousands of dollars)

|               |   |     |     |     |     |     |
|---------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| GENERAL FUND  |   |     |     |     |     |     |
| FEDERAL FUNDS |   |     |     |     |     |     |
| OTHER         | 0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| TOTAL         | 0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 | 4.0 |

POSITIONS:

|           |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FULL-TIME | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| PART-TIME | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| TEMPORARY | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary.)

CSSB 134 (L&C) provides for licensing of acupuncturists by the department. The bill will allow acupuncture services to be offered by all qualified individuals; whereas, currently only medical doctors can offer acupuncture services. The costs identified in this fiscal note are explained on the following page.

Prepared by: Jennifer Strickler, Administrative Officer Phone: 465-2144  
Division: Occupational Licensing Date: March 20, 1989

Approved by Commissioner: Larry Mercuriotti, Commissioner Phone: 465-2500  
Agency: Department of Commerce & Economic Development Date: 3/28/89

Distribution (by preparer):

Legislative Finance  
Legislative Sponsor  
Requestor  
Office of Management and Budget  
Impacted Agency(ies)

## CONTINUATION of FISCAL NOTE ANALYSIS

### CSSB 134 (L&C)

Testimony on this bill has revealed that very few acupuncturists currently reside in-state (fewer than five) and that only a few additional acupuncturists are expected to seek admission should this legislation pass. For the purposes of this fiscal note, we have anticipated a maximum of ten licensees.

This fiscal note differs from previous fiscal notes on the subject in that a portion of overhead personal services costs which the program can be expected to cover are included. As with all licensing occupations, each program is attributed a portion of administrative expenses of the division based on the number of licensees divided by the total number of division licensees. In this case, ten licensees represent .004% of the administrative costs reflected in the personal services and contractual services line items of the divisions's budget.

Because of the small number of practitioners, it would be unreasonable to establish a licensing fee which would require those few licensees to bear the entire cost of the licensing function. In such cases, the licensing costs must be supplemented by general funds or other licensing fees.

Revenues: The revenues projected are based on ten licensees paying a biennial license fee of \$400.

Original sponsors: Duncan and Rodey

1 IN THE SENATE

BY THE LABOR AND  
COMMERCE COMMITTEE

2

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 134 (L&C) am

3

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4

SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5

A BILL

6 For an Act entitled: "An Act relating to the practice of acupuncture."

7 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

8 \* Section 1. PURPOSE. The health, safety, and welfare of the people of  
9 the state are best served by the establishment of an orderly system of  
10 licensure for the practice of acupuncture in the state. The rapid develop-  
11 ment of the profession, including the establishment of national standards  
12 for the education and practice of acupuncturists, has resulted in increased  
13 public interest and increased demand for access to qualified acupunctur-  
14 ists.

15 \* Sec. 2. AS 08 is amended by adding a new chapter to read:

16 CHAPTER 06. ACUPUNCTURE.

17 Sec. 08.06.010. PRACTICE OF ACUPUNCTURE WITHOUT LICENSE PROHIB-  
18 ITED. A person may not practice acupuncture without a license.

19 Sec. 08.06.020. APPLICATION FOR LICENSE. A person desiring to  
20 practice acupuncture shall apply in writing to the department.

21 Sec. 08.06.030. LICENSE TO PRACTICE ACUPUNCTURE. (a) A person  
22 is qualified to receive a license to practice acupuncture if the  
23 person

24 (1) is of good moral character;

25 (2) is at least 21 years of age;

26 (3) either

27 (A) has completed a course of study consistent with  
28 the core curriculum and guidelines of the National Council of  
29 Acupuncture Schools and Colleges at a school of acupuncture

1 approved by the department; or

2 (B) is licensed to practice acupuncture in another  
3 state that has acupuncture licensing requirements equivalent to  
4 those of this state;

5 (4) is qualified for certification by the National Council  
6 for the Certification of Acupuncturists as a diplomate in acupuncture;

7 (5) does not have a disciplinary proceeding or unresolved  
8 complaint pending at the time of application; and

9 (6) has not had a license to practice acupuncture suspended  
10 or revoked in this state or in another state, territory, or province.

11 (b) The department shall issue a license to practice acupuncture  
12 to each person who is qualified and who pays the appropriate fee.

13 (c) Each person licensed to practice acupuncture under this  
14 chapter shall display the license in a conspicuous place where the  
15 licensee practices.

16 Sec. 08.06.040. RENEWAL OF LICENSE. The department may not  
17 renew a license under this chapter unless the applicant

18 (1) demonstrates continued competence as an acupuncturist  
19 in a manner established by the department in regulations; and

20 (2) submits proof that the applicant maintains certifica-  
21 tion by the National Council for the Certification of Acupuncturists  
22 as a diplomate of acupuncture.

23 Sec. 08.06.050. DISCLOSURE. (a) A person who practices acu-  
24 puncture shall disclose that the person's training and practice are in  
25 acupuncture

26 (1) to each patient; and

27 (2) on all material used in the practice of acupuncture and  
28 made available to patients or to the public.

29 (b) A person who practices acupuncture without being covered by

1 malpractice insurance shall disclose to each patient that the person  
2 does not have the insurance.

3 Sec. 08.06.060. RESTRICTIONS ON PRACTICE OF ACUPUNCTURE. A  
4 person who practices acupuncture may not

5 (1) give, prescribe, or recommend in the practice a

6 (A) prescription drug;

7 (B) controlled substance;

8 (C) poison;

9 (2) engage in surgery; or

10 (3) use the word "physician" in the person's title unless  
11 the person is also licensed as a physician.

12 Sec. 08.06.070. GROUNDS FOR IMPOSITION OF DISCIPLINARY SANC-  
13 TIONS. After a hearing, the department may impose a disciplinary  
14 sanction on a person licensed under this chapter when the department  
15 finds that the licensee

16 (1) secured a license through deceit, fraud, or intentional  
17 misrepresentation;

18 (2) engaged in deceit, fraud, or intentional misrepresenta-  
19 tion in the course of providing professional services or engaging in  
20 professional activities;

21 (3) advertised professional services in a false or mislead-  
22 ing manner;

23 (4) has been convicted of a felony or other crime that  
24 affects the licensee's ability to continue to practice competently and  
25 safely;

26 (5) intentionally or negligently engaged in patient care,  
27 or permitted the performance of patient care by persons under the  
28 licensee's supervision, that does not conform to minimum professional  
29 standards regardless of whether actual injury to the patient occurred;

1 (6) failed to comply with this chapter, with a regulation  
2 adopted under this chapter, or with an order of the department;

3 (7) continued to practice after becoming unfit due to

4 (A) professional incompetence;

5 (B) failure to keep informed of current professional  
6 practices;

7 (C) addiction to or severe dependency on alcohol or  
8 other drugs that impairs the ability to practice safely;

9 (D) physical or mental disability; or

10 (8) engaged in lewd or immoral conduct in connection with  
11 the delivery of professional service to patients.

12 Sec. 08.06.080. EXEMPTION. This chapter does not apply to a  
13 person who practices acupuncture under AS 08.36 or AS 08.64.

14 Sec. 08.06.090. PENALTY. A person who violates this chapter or  
15 a regulation adopted under this chapter is guilty of a class B misde-  
16 meanor.

17 Sec. 08.06.100. REGULATIONS. The department may adopt regula-  
18 tions to implement this chapter, including regulations establishing

19 (1) standards for the practice of acupuncture;

20 (2) standards for continuing education and training;

21 (3) a code of ethics for the practice of acupuncture.

22 Sec. 08.06.190. DEFINITIONS. In this chapter

23 (1) "acupuncture" means a form of healing developed from  
24 traditional Chinese medical concepts that uses the stimulation of  
25 certain points on or near the surface of the body by the insertion of  
26 needles to prevent or modify the perception of pain or to normalize  
27 physiological functions;

28 (2) "department" means the Department of Commerce and  
29 Economic Development;

1           (3) "practice of acupuncture" means the insertion of ster-  
2           ile acupuncture needles and the application of moxibustion to specific  
3           areas of the human body based upon acupuncture diagnosis; the practice  
4           of acupuncture includes adjunctive therapies involving mechanical,  
5           thermal, electrical, and electromagnetic treatment and the recommenda-  
6           tion of dietary guidelines and therapeutic exercise.

7           \* Sec. 3. AS 08.01.010 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

8                     (31) regulation of acupuncturists under AS 08.06.

9           \* Sec. 4. AS 08.01.050(a) is amended to read:

10                   (a) The department shall perform the following administrative  
11                   and budgetary services when appropriate:

12                             (1) collect and record fees;

13                             (2) maintain records and files;

14                             (3) issue and receive application forms;

15                             (4) notify applicants of acceptance or rejection as deter-  
16                   mined by the board or as determined by the department under AS 08.06  
17                   for acupuncturists, under AS 08.11 for audiologists, under AS 08.45  
18                   for naturopaths, or under AS 08.55 for hearing aid dealers;

19                             (5) designate dates examinations are to be held and notify  
20                   applicants;

21                             (6) publish notice of examinations and proceedings;

22                             (7) arrange space for holding examinations and proceedings;

23                             (8) notify applicants of results of examinations;

24                             (9) issue licenses or temporary licenses as authorized by  
25                   the board or as authorized by the department under AS 08.06 for acu-  
26                   puncturists, under AS 08.11 for audiologists, under AS 08.45 for  
27                   naturopaths, or under AS 08.55 for hearing aid dealers;

28                             (10) issue duplicate licenses upon submission of a written  
29                   request by the licensee attesting to loss of or the failure to receive

1 the original and payment by the licensee of a fee established by  
2 regulation adopted by the department;

3 (11) notify licensees of renewal dates at least 30 days  
4 before the expiration date of their licenses;

5 (12) compile and maintain a current register of licensees;

6 (13) answer routine inquiries;

7 (14) maintain files relating to individual licensees;

8 (15) arrange for printing and advertising;

9 (16) purchase supplies;

10 (17) employ additional help when needed;

11 (18) perform other services that may be requested by the  
12 board;

13 (19) provide inspection, enforcement, and investigative  
14 services to the boards and for the occupations listed in AS 08.01.010,  
15 regarding all licenses issued by or through the department;

16 (20) retain and safeguard the official seal of a board and  
17 prepare, sign, and affix a board seal, as appropriate, for licenses  
18 approved by a board;

19 (21) issue business licenses under AS 43.70.

20 \* Sec. 5. AS 08.02 10(a) is amended to read:

21 (a) An acupunccurist licensed under AS 08.06, an audiologist  
22 licensed under AS 08.11, a person licensed in the state as a chiro-  
23 practor under AS 08.20, a dentist under AS 08.36, a medical practi-  
24 tioner or osteopath under AS 08.64, a registered nurse under AS 08.68,  
25 an optometrist under AS 08.72, a registered pharmacist under AS 08.80,  
26 a registered physical therapist or occupational therapist under  
27 AS 08.84, a psychologist under AS 08.86, or a clinical social worker  
28 licensed under AS 08.95, shall use as professional identification  
29 appropriate letters or a title after that person's name which

1 represents that person's specific field of practice. The letters or  
2 title shall appear on all signs, stationery, or other advertising in  
3 which the person offers or displays personal professional services to  
4 the public. In addition, a person engaged in the practice of medicine  
5 or osteopathy as defined in AS 08.64.380, or a person engaged in any  
6 manner in the healing arts who diagnoses, treats, tests, or counsels  
7 other persons in relation to human health or disease and uses the  
8 letters "M.D." or the title "doctor" or "physician" or another title  
9 that tends to show that the person is willing or qualified to diag-  
10 nose, treat, test, or counsel another person, shall clarify the let-  
11 ters or title by adding the appropriate specialist designation, if  
12 any, such as "dermatologist", "radiologist", "audiologist", "naturo-  
13 path", or the like.

14 \* Sec. 6. AS 08.36 is amended by adding a new section to read:

15 Sec. 08.36.114. QUALIFICATIONS FOR ACUPUNCTURE APPLICANTS. An  
16 applicant for a license to perform acupuncture in the regular practice  
17 of dentistry shall be licensed under AS 08.36.100 and shall satisfy  
18 those requirements of experience or education in the practice of  
19 acupuncture as may be adopted by the board.

20 \* Sec. 7. AS 08.64.170(a) is amended to read:

21 (a) A person may not practice medicine, podiatry, or osteopathy  
22 [, OR ACUPUNCTURE] in the state unless the person is licensed under  
23 this chapter, except that

24 (1) a physician assistant may examine, diagnose, or treat  
25 persons under the supervision, control, and responsibility of either a  
26 physician licensed under this chapter or a physician exempted from  
27 licensing under AS 08.64.370;

28 (2) a physician-trained mobile intensive care paramedic may  
29 render emergency lifesaving service; and

1           (3) [A PERSON LICENSED UNDER AS 08.36 MAY PERFORM ACUPUNC-  
2 TURE IN THE REGULAR PRACTICE OF DENTISTRY, SUBJECT TO THE REGULATIONS  
3 OF THE BOARD OF DENTAL EXAMINERS; AND

4           (4)] a person who is licensed or authorized under another  
5 chapter of this title may engage in a practice that is authorized  
6 under that chapter.

7 \* Sec. 8. AS 08.64.180 is amended to read:

8           Sec. 08.64.180. APPLICATION FOR LICENSE. A person who desires  
9 to practice medicine or [,] osteopathy [OR ACUPUNCTURE] in the state  
10 shall apply in writing to the department for a license.

11 \* Sec. 9. AS 09.55.560(1) is amended to read:

12           (1) "health care provider" means an acupuncturist licensed  
13 under AS 08.06; an audiologist licensed under AS 08.11; a chiropractor  
14 licensed under AS 08.20; a dental hygienist licensed under AS 08.32; a  
15 dentist licensed under AS 08.36; a nurse licensed under AS 08.68; a  
16 dispensing optician licensed under AS 08.71; a naturopath licensed  
17 under AS 08.45; an optometrist licensed under AS 08.72; a pharmacist  
18 licensed under AS 08.80; a physical therapist or occupational thera-  
19 pist licensed under AS 08.84; a physician licensed under AS 08.64; a  
20 podiatrist; a psychologist and a psychological associate licensed  
21 under AS 08.86; and a hospital as defined in AS 18.20.130, including a  
22 governmentally owned or operated hospital; a corporate entity covered  
23 under AS 21.88.050(b)(11); and an employee of a health care provider  
24 acting within the course and scope of employment;

25 \* Sec. 10. AS 18.23.070(3) is amended to read:

26           (3) "health care provider" means an acupuncturist licensed  
27 under AS 08.06; a chiropractor licensed under AS 08.20; a dental  
28 hygienist licensed under AS 08.32; a dentist licensed under AS 08.36;  
29 a nurse licensed under AS 08.68; a dispensing optician licensed under

1 AS 08.71; an optometrist licensed under AS 08.72; a pharmacist li-  
2 censed under AS 08.80; a physical therapist or occupational therapist  
3 licensed under AS 08.84; a physician licensed under AS 08.64; a podia-  
4 trist; a psychologist and a psychological associate licensed under  
5 AS 08.86; and a hospital as defined in AS 18.20.130, including a  
6 governmentally owned or operated hospital; a corporate entity covered  
7 under AS 21.88.050(b)(1); and an employee of a health care provider  
8 acting within the course and scope of employment;

9 \* Sec. 11. AS 21.42 is amended by adding a new section to read:

10 Sec. 21.42.353. COVERAGE FOR COSTS OF ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT. An  
11 insurer authorized under AS 21.09 to offer, issue for delivery, deliv-  
12 er, or renew a disability insurance policy in the state, or a hospital  
13 or medical service corporation authorized under AS 21.87 to offer or  
14 renew a subscriber's contract, may offer coverage for services of an  
15 acupuncturist licensed under AS 08.06 if the policy or contract covers  
16 acupuncture treatment by a health care provider who is subject to  
17 other provisions of AS 08.

18 \* Sec. 12. AS 21.88.900(9) is amended to read:

19 (9) "health care provider" means an acupuncturist licensed  
20 under AS 08.06; an audiologist licensed under AS 08.11; a chiropractor  
21 licensed under AS 08.20; a dental hygienist licensed under AS 08.32; a  
22 dentist licensed under AS 08.36; a nurse licensed under AS 08.68; a  
23 dispensing optician licensed under AS 08.71; an optometrist licensed  
24 under AS 08.72; a pharmacist licensed under AS 08.80; a physical  
25 therapist or occupational therapist licensed under AS 08.84; a physi-  
26 cian licensed under AS 08.64; a podiatrist; a psychologist and a  
27 psychological associate licensed under AS 08.86; a hospital as defined  
28 in AS 18.20.130, including a governmentally owned or operated hospi-  
29 tal; a corporate entity covered under AS 21.88.050(b)(11); an employee

1 of a health care provider acting within the course and scope of em-  
2 ployment;

3 \* Sec. 13. AS 21.88.900 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

4 (18) "acupuncturist" means a person licensed under AS 08.06.

5 \* Sec. 14. AS 47.17.070(9) is amended to read:

6 (9) "practitioner of the healing arts" includes acupunct-  
7 urists, chiropractors, dental hygienists, dentists, health aides,  
8 nurses, nurse practitioners, occupational therapists, occupational  
9 therapy assistants, optometrists, osteopaths, naturopaths, physical  
10 therapists, physical therapy assistants, physicians, physician's  
11 assistants, psychiatrists, psychologists, psychological associates,  
12 audiologists licensed under AS 08.11, hearing aid dealers licensed  
13 under AS 08.55, religious healing practitioners, and surgeons;

14 \* Sec. 15. AS 08.64.207 and 08.64.380(1) are repealed.

## WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE?

Acupuncture is a healing method used in traditional Chinese medicine, a medical system with a history of thousands of years of effective use, now practiced worldwide.

### Bioenergetics of the Acupuncture Network

- . Traditional Chinese ideas of energy exchange are like those of modern physics--the same principles work in all parts of the universe, however large or small--the solar system, an atom, or a human body.
- . The acupuncture network in the body is an "electromagnetic circulatory system" of energy flow along channels related to the organs. The energy, called qi, (pronounced chee) flows like current in an electrical system.
- . The twelve main channels are directly connected to organs--heart, liver, kidney, stomach, etc. They are "circuits" with energy flowing from the organs out into the arms and legs and back. There are also extra channels, for example, the "belt" channel, which goes around the waist. All of these form a network.
- . The network can "signal" the organs to do different things. Recent research in China has shown that putting a needle in the large intestine point on a dog's paw will change the movements of its large intestine.

### Energy Balance

- . Balance in the energy network means good health. As long as the network is strong, balanced, and not blocked, a person will be healthy. Imagine a body with its "electromagnetic circulatory system" flowing along about the same lines as the blood circulatory system. Visualize the lines of current with a strong, consistent glow, and a smooth, regular flow through all the channels. This is the picture of health.
- . Imbalance means disease. The flow of energy can be too weak, too strong, blocked, or not moving in the proper pathways. For example, if you could photograph the network, a sprain might appear as a hot spot or "short." A migraine headache might show a blockage, and a heart attack would reveal a weak or blank spot.

## Diagnosis

- . Diagnosis in Chinese medicine looks for patterns of imbalance in this energy network that relate to signs and symptoms in the body.
- . Traditional diagnosis uses a history and physical examination. The doctor asks special questions about what has happened inside and outside the body that put the system out of balance--wind, cold, heat, emotions, excess food or drink--and many others. A traditional oriental medical doctor will look at skin color, examine "alarm points" along the channels that indicate imbalance, look at the tongue, and feel the pulses. These are just a few of the important parts of a traditional medical examination.

## Treatment

- . Treatment balances the system. Points are stimulated to increase energy, dissolve blockages--to encourage all of the "involuntary" body processes to return to their natural state of harmony. The main treatments used either alone or in combination to balance the system are:

acupuncture      herbs      moxa      massage

- . Acupuncture stimulates points along the channels with very fine needles. These are now almost always made of stainless steel, but traditionally they could be made of other materials--bone, bamboo, silver, gold. The needles have different effects depending on what points are used. Sometimes needles are electrically stimulated, usually for added pain relief or anaesthesia.
- . Herbs are taken as teas or pills to do the work of balancing. They are very specific in their effects, and can be given easily in combinations made up especially for each individual.
- . Moxa is an herb that is burned close to the skin, or sometimes directly on the skin to stimulate the points with heat.
- . Massage stimulates the points with pressure to give balancing effect.
- . Of course, the complicated imbalance in many illnesses often make the process of diagnosis and treatment complicated too. As in Western medicine, traditional Chinese diagnosis and treatment is an art as well as a science.

## Staying Well With Traditional Medicine

"Wholeness" of outlook is a historic part of Chinese medicine. According to tradition, people paid their doctors when they were healthy, and stopped paying them when they were ill. Whether true or not, this shows that the idea was to keep people well, and to look for and treat the earliest signs of illness. Preventive health care--diet, rest, exercise, and emotional and spiritual balance--has always been of greatest importance in the Chinese medical tradition.

## How an Acupuncture Treatment Feels

Acupuncture needles are very fine, so they are relatively painless. There is a pinprick sensation as the needle goes through the skin, followed by the sensation of the needle "taking the energy"--connecting with the system. This may be felt as a tingling or traveling sensation, soreness, heaviness, warmth or aching. Among their many effects, the needles stimulate the release of endorphins--the body's own pain-killers--so there is generally a feeling of well-being and relaxation.

## How to Help Your Treatment Work Better

Because treatments "rearrange" your energetic pattern, moderation is the key in eating, exercise and exposure to temperatures to maintain the new energy arrangement. The two hours immediately before and after your treatment is not the time for a heavy meal, alcoholic drinks or pain relievers, a strenuous workout, or a trip to the sauna.

Acupuncture and herbs have a cumulative effect, so it is also important to follow through with a recommended series of treatments to get the desired results, and to follow all other instructions from your practitioner.

## Treatment Response

Most patients want to know whether acupuncture just treats symptoms, or if it can really relieve the causes of their illness. With many different kinds of problems, the energetic changes brought about by acupuncture and herbs can bring a person fully back to health.

Results depend on the duration and nature of the disease, the amount of damage that has been done, whether surgery has been performed, the age and general health of the person--the same kinds of factors that determine outcomes in Western medicine.

Even if a disease process has gone too far to be reversed

entirely, it is often possible to slow or stop the progress of the disease, or at least to provide some relief from symptoms so that the person can live more comfortably.

### Sterilization

Acupuncture needles are sterilized according to protocols approved for surgical instruments. Depending on your practitioner, steam autoclave or dry heat sterilization may be used. Sterilization is, by definition, the killing of all bacterial, fungus, virus, and spores.

Just as it is safe to re-use surgical instruments after they have been properly sterilized, it is also safe to re-use needles. If you are still concerned about this issue, ask your practitioner, and they will use disposable needles. Disposable needles are generally used for all people with hepatitis or AIDS or for people at high risk for these diseases.

Sterilization and all procedural techniques follow the Clean Needle Technique manual prepared by the National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture.

### The American Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine

The AAOM is a national organization of practitioners and students of acupuncture and Oriental medicine. Its purposes are:

- to provide the primary organizational forum for state, regional and specialized acupuncture organizations in the United States
- to elevate standards of practice and education
- to provide a forum for sharing of professional knowledge
- to assist in the establishment of just health codes and laws and to support those that exist
- to develop and establish continuing education programs for professionals
- to educate the general public about Oriental medicine
- to promote, encourage and support research
- to support and cooperate with the national professional organizations for certification of practitioners and educational institutions in our field, the National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture and the National Accreditation Commission for Schools and Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.