



February 21, 2013

Senator Irene Aguilar, Chair
Health and Human Services Committee
Colorado State Legislature
200 East Colfax
Denver, CO 80203

RE: SB13-172 Sunset Continue Acupuncture Regulation

Dear Senator Aguilar:

As the Chief Executive Officer of the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM[®]), I would like to provide background information and rationale for the creation and implementation of the NCCAOM Biomedicine examination, which is required in states as a prerequisite to acupuncture licensure, to include the state of Colorado. The Biomedicine Examination Module was created, in part, because of the results of the 2003 NCCAOM Job Analysis, which indicated that practitioners needed to possess at least some basic knowledge of western medicine for two reasons. First, practitioners are treating patients who are also receiving treatments from a western medical practitioner and in order to communicate with their patients, practitioners have to have some knowledge of western medical practices for this purpose. Secondly, in addition to communicating with patients, a practitioner frequently has to communicate with the patient's western medical practitioner. Integrative care is becoming more and more prevalent in today's medicine and consumer demand is increasing. It is a fact that more and more patients are routinely employing both conventional and complementary and alternative forms of medicine for the treatment of their medical conditions.

In addition to the results of the Job Analysis, state regulators had expressed concerns that acupuncture practitioners were not sufficiently cognizant in how to handle an emergency situation or when and how to refer a patient to a western medical practitioner. State regulators desired more than just a reliance on acupuncture and Oriental medicine educational institutions in obtaining knowledge, skills and abilities in this area and wanted to ensure that practitioners were assessed through a robust examination process. This would also ensure that all practitioners were measured for competency through the same standard, via an examination that would clearly demonstrate an applicant's knowledge in these critical areas. The Biomedicine Module was



designed to meet the needs of state regulators and to conform to the results of the NCCAOM Job Analysis.

At the time the Biomedicine Module was created, it was imperative to ensure that all applicants were measured on their competency for Biomedicine through a separate exam versus questions embedded in one examination, such as the previous comprehensive examination. By changing to a modular format for all of our examinations, Biomedicine included, this enabled the NCCAOM to make sure that each applicant passed each area of core competencies separately to Acupuncture with Point location, Foundations of Oriental Medicine, Chinese Herbology and Biomedicine. Applicants could not take one of our examinations, for instance, the Foundations of Oriental Medicine module, and answer all of the biomedicine questions wrong and still pass the examination. As a result of the 2008 Job Task Analysis, the Biomedicine exam content has been updated to reflect more of an emphasis on safety, ethics and practice management. The questions have also been increased from 50 to 100 items. I have attached the NCCAOM Biomedicine Examination Content Outline for your review, which displays a breakdown of the different domains tested in the exam. The NCCAOM is conducting another Job Analysis this year and will be updating the content outline for all of its exams later this year.

As a result of the above implementation of the Biomedicine exam, more and more states have added this examination to their requirements as a measure for safety, practice management, Western medicine referral, and ethics.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information. If I can answer any additional questions about the NCCAOM or the Biomedicine exam, please contact me by email at kwardcook@thenccaom.org or by phone at 904-674-2501.

Sincerely,

Kory Ward-Cook, Ph.D. MT(ASCP), CAE
Chief Executive Officer