

CALIFORNIA Acupuncture Board

STRATEGIC PLAN

March 15, 2007



CALIFORNIA ACUPUNCTURE BOARD

444 North 3rd Street, Suite 260, Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 445-3021 / Fax: (916) 445-3015
E-mail: acupuncture@dca.ca.gov Web: www.acupuncture.ca.gov

State of California
Department of Consumer Affairs
Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor



March 15, 2007

We are pleased to present the 2007 Strategic Plan for the California Acupuncture Board. The plan was created and reviewed at two public Board meetings, and the planning process considered feedback from acupuncture colleges, associations, Board members, and professional staff. This document presents a five year projection of the direction and goals for the California Acupuncture Board.

The primary responsibility of the Board is to protect California consumers from incompetent or fraudulent practice through enforcement of the California Acupuncture Licensure Act and the Board's regulations. The Board also promotes safe practice through the improvement of educational training standards, continuing education, enforcement of the Business and Professions Code, and public outreach.

Goals selected in this plan include clarifying higher education standards; reviewing and clarifying the acupuncture scope of practice; continuing to promote the ethical conduct of licensees and students; clarifying the process of school approval; improving continuing education standards; and improving communication with the industry and consumers.

It is our hope that this plan will promote fair and ethical standards of professional conduct for the benefit of California consumers.

Sincerely,

JANELLE WEDGE
Executive Officer

MISSION

The mission of the Acupuncture Board is to benefit, educate, and protect the public through regulation of licensure; development of education standards; provision of consumer information; and enforcement of the Acupuncture Licensure Act.

VISION

The Acupuncture Board is committed to the enhancement of the health and safety of the people of California by ensuring:

- Highly qualified practitioners working as primary health care professionals in partnership with other health care providers,
- Fair and ethical standards of professional conduct.
- Excellence in practitioner training and education.

PRINCIPLES

The Board values the following:

- Meeting the needs of the public that we serve with integrity,
- Striving to provide a quality service to the public and the profession,
- Appreciation for the members and staff of the Board.

EVALUATION OF STRENGTHS, WEAKNESS, OPPORTUNITY AND THREATS

The Board of Acupuncture met with principal staff at the Department of Consumer Affairs, Sacramento, CA, on Feb. 2, 2007. This group reviewed a variety of inputs, including survey and structured interview feedback from acupuncture schools and colleges, from oriental medicine associations, and from Board professional staff. The following assessment of strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats was developed from that feedback, as a primary means of determining priorities for action, strategic goals, and objectives.

AREAS OF STRENGTH:

- Board staff is well trained and qualified, with good communication skills.
- The California Acupuncture Licensing Exam (CALE) is fair and conducted in a professional manner.
- The staff has done a good job in establishing new educational standards.
- The Board has transitioned well to a role of protecting the public, as advised by the Little Hoover Commission.
- The Board staff has done a good job in responding to the number and type of complaints received.

AREAS OF WEAKNESS:

- There is dissatisfaction with the number, type, and content of the continuing education classes offered.
- School certification process needs improvement.
- ADA accommodation requests can impair best-practice CALE examination practices.
- Enforcement process needs improvement.
- Out-of-state qualification for CALE exam could be simplified.

BOARD OPPORTUNITIES:

- The title of Doctor of Oriental medicine should be supported by clear academic standards, in support of a higher standard of care.
- Clarification of the scope of practice would assist enforcement, and help the industry to understand the legal limits of practice.

BOARD THREATS

- Legislative sunset review in 2010.

STRATEGIC GOALS

The Board gap analysis presented the need for a 3-5 year strategic focus in seven key goal areas, as described below:

1. **Advance higher education standards.**
2. **Review, clarify and disseminate the scope of practice.**
3. **Promote ethical conduct of licensees and students.**
4. **Reduce or eliminate unlicensed activity**
5. **Clarify the process of school approval.**
6. **Re-evaluate and improve Continuing Education Standards.**
7. **Improve communication with the industry and consumers.**

The following pages show each strategic goal with its associated objectives.

STRATEGIC GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

1. Advance higher education standards.

INTENDED OUTCOME/ RESULT:

Accomplishment of this goal will ensure a higher standard of care for all Californians, while creating a level playing field for practitioners. It should alleviate a major category of complaint, by clarifying the legal and professional standard for a Doctor of Oriental Medicine. It will advance consumer protection because when consumers choose to pay money to see a Doctor they will be sure they are getting a higher standard of care and professionalism.

OBJECTIVE 1.1 – Clarify issues regarding the title of Doctor: Board staff to review and clarify issues regarding using the title of Doctor. Board members to work with colleges to facilitate a recognized industry standard of doctoral education at the entry level, and at post-graduate level (DAOM).

OBJECTIVE 1.2 - Upgrade MAc Level practitioner standards:

Board members to work with colleges to facilitate a recognized industry standard. This effort will assess professional concerns and determine which changes might best upgrade existing standards.

2. Review, clarify and disseminate the scope of practice.

INTENDED OUTCOME/ RESULT:

This goal would improve quality of care and improve enforcement practices, because it would ensure that licensed practitioners know the legal limits of practice. It would clarify what practitioners can and cannot do. This review would assess new technology and clarify its use. It would ensure that consumers have appropriate access to these benefits.

OBJECTIVE 2.1 - Evaluate current scope of practice: Accomplish professional/ legal review of existing scope of practice, and recommendations regarding change.

OBJECTIVE 2.2 - Update scope of practice: Implement updated scope of practice as a new regulatory package.

3. Promote ethical conduct of licensees and students.

INTENDED OUTCOME/ RESULT:

It is the intent of the board that enforcement actions be taken fairly, justly, and quickly when infractions occur.

OBJECTIVE 3.1 – Improve communication of ethical standards: Develop ways to better communicate ethical conduct to licensees and students.

OBJECTIVE 3.2 – Improve information regarding filing a complaint: Provide information regarding how to file a complaint in Chinese, and Korean, as well as in English.

OBJECTIVE 3.3 – Enable spot inspections: Obtain legislative authority to go into a place of practice to conduct spot inspections.

OBJECTIVE 3.4 – Address false and inappropriate advertising: The Board needs to address complaints regarding false and inappropriate advertising.

OBJECTIVE 3.5 – Develop enforcement options: Board Enforcement and Education Committees should determine enforcement options regarding unethical use of the title of doctor. Develop regulatory change to support conclusions.

4. Reduce or eliminate unlicensed activity.

INTENDED OUTCOME/ RESULT:

To provide the public with protection from the unlicensed practice of acupuncture

OBJECTIVE 4.1 – Enhance penalties: Enact provisions making the unlicensed practice of acupuncture a felony.

5. Clarify the process of school approval.

INTENDED OUTCOME/ RESULT:

Identify areas of dissatisfaction and uncertainty. Make changes to remove requirements that are unclear or that do not add value. Develop an approval process that works smoothly, that is well understood, and agreed on by participants.

OBJECTIVE 5.1 – Simplify approval process: Create simplification of school approvals by allowing approval by an accrediting body of acupuncture schools, accepted by the U.S. Department of Education, as a replacement for a site visit and determination of fiscal solvency by Board staff. Adopt recommended process changes and modify internal Board process to match.

OBJECTIVE 5.2 – Address approval of online courses: Evaluate and implement distance learning school approval standards.

6. Re-evaluate and improve Continuing Education Standards.

INTENDED OUTCOME/ RESULT:

A greater variety of continuing education course offerings that practitioners like, and that are helpful to their conducting a business. These should include classroom and distance learning options. There should be good market acceptance of all CE classes.

OBJECTIVE 6.1 – Simplify approval process for CE classes: Review and simplify the approval process for CE classes.

OBJECTIVE 6.2 – Approval process for distance learning: Implement an approval process for distance learning CE courses.

OBJECTIVE 6.3 – Audit process for questioned courses: Develop an audit process for courses that are questioned, through a review by licensees in good standing.

7. Improve communication with the industry and consumers

INTENDED OUTCOME/ RESULT:

Regular, proactive communications with practitioners and consumers. Keeping these groups informed of standards and activities through a newsletter and a website. Good communications in Chinese, Korean, and English.

OBJECTIVE 7.1 – Use newsletter as a primary communication medium: Newsletter should be issued twice yearly.

OBJECTIVE 7.2 – Expand multi-lingual communication: Obtain funding for Chinese and Korean translations of the existing Board web page, and for translation of the Consumers Guide to Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. The Board should regularly do outreach to Chinese, Japanese and Korean press.

OBJECTIVE 7.3 – Direct to consumer communications: Provide Board information at Trade Shows and Consumer fairs.