

Questions & Answers regarding the Action Strategy Acupuncture-U.S. Health Care Reform Plan

1. Q: What is the U.S. Health Care Reform Plan?

A: President Obama has long noted that continued skyrocketing health care costs would be disastrous in both fiscal and human terms for this country. The rising costs of health care have been a burden on our families and a drain on our nation's economic health.

The goals of health care reform will include: (1) to assure affordable, quality health coverage for all Americans, including the 46 million-plus Americans who don't have any health insurance currently; (2) to reduce the out-of-control skyrocketing health care costs effecting individuals, business and government; (3) to protect families from economic ruin, resulting in bankruptcy or overpowering debt attributed to health care costs; (4) to guarantee choice of doctors and health plans; (5) to invest in prevention and wellness; (6) to improve patient safety and quality of care; (7) to maintain coverage in the event of job change or loss; and (8) to eliminate barriers to coverage for people with pre-existing medical conditions.

U.S. legislators have discussed a detailed health care reform plan and have been working on language for this legislation. This legislation will hopefully be finalized and introduced in Congress for deliberation in September of this year. However, because such a health care reform plan will have a direct impact on insurance carriers, medical providers, pharmaceutical companies, and the insured, finalizing such legislation that will truly provide real reform will be extremely difficult.

2. Q: Why should the acupuncture community take any action to convince the legislators to consider the inclusion of acupuncture in the U.S. Health Care Reform Plan?

A: We don't know if the current Administration will be able to push such a legislative initiative successfully. We don't know that the final reform bill will look like and how many compromises will have to be agreed to. This is a powerfully political subject and the insurance companies and pharmaceutical companies – and many Republican members of Congress – DO NOT want to see the President succeed in the effort. We do, however, believe that it will greatly benefit the patient and the acupuncturist if we are able to share the health care market with other health care providers in such a health care reform plan. Otherwise, acupuncturists and patients of acupuncture will face more severe challenges to survive. To ensure that Acupuncture is a part of the U.S. Health Care Reform Plan, we must immediately take action to convince Members of Congress of the importance of including Acupuncture in the Plan.

3. Q: How can I participate in this effort?

A: You may participate in this effort in one or more of the following ways:

- (a) Write a petition letter to President Obama on behalf yourself, your organization or your school telling him why the inclusion of Acupuncture in the Plan is so important to Americans;
- (b) Write a letter on behalf of yourself, your organization or your school to the key individuals in Congress and Senate who are working on crafting legislative language for the Plan;
- (c) Write a letter on behalf of yourself, your organization or your school to your own Congressman or Senator from your district;
- (d) Share the information on this issue with your colleagues, classmates, students, and patients, and ask them to get involved in the effort and write letters;
- (e) Locate potential political, media or personal channels and deliver letters to them directly.

We have drafted a sample of the petition letter and provided a list of the key-persons' contacting information (please refer to the attachments), for your reference. Of course, you may write a letter with your own words if you would like to do so.

4. Q: Who are the key-persons working on the Plan? How can I contact them?

A: The key-persons who are working on the legislative language include: Senator Edward M Kennedy (D-MA, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions), Senator Christopher Dodd (D-CT,

the member of the same committee), Senator Bernard Sanders (I-VT, the member of the same committee), Senator Max Baucus (D-MT, Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee), and Senator Chuck Grassley (R-IA, the member of the Senate Finance Committee). Of course, President Obama is the key advocate for a comprehensive U.S. Health Care Reform Plan. We suggest that you send your petition letter to the above listed persons via postal mail and fax, or submit a comment form via their website, by end of July. Their contact information has been enclosed with the document.

5. Q: What are the key points needed to be presented to those legislators in our petition letter?

A: To make a compelling case for the inclusion of Acupuncture in any U.S. Health Care Reform Plan, the following points should be included:

- (a) Acupuncture is safe, reliable and cost-effective health care protocol;
- (b) Acupuncture is a proven, scientific, evidence-based and peer-reviewed health care protocol;
- (c) Passage of a U.S. Health Care Reform Plan that includes Acupuncture will benefit thousands of constituents who are in need of these services;
- (d) Inclusion of Acupuncture in a U.S. Health Care Reform Plan will reduce health care costs;
- (e) Acupuncture is the key in any health care system for the prevention of disease and promotion of overall wellness.

6. Q: Can we reach this goal successfully?

A: Because of our limited political strength and resources, we are unable to predict our success. However, we certainly must make every effort available to us to succeed. The more people involved in this effort, the better chance for having an impact on the outcome we will have.

7. Q: Why should we unite together and concentrate our strength on promoting this legislative action immediately?

A: To reach our stated legislative goal, we must convince those Legislators who are working on crafting legislative language for the Plan to consider Acupuncture as a covered benefit for inclusion in that Plan. Since the bill must be finalized in August, we must express our intention to those Legislators by end of July. Otherwise, our voice will not be heard.

If we are able to reach our goal of inclusion of Acupuncture in the Plan, we will initiate the second phase of the effort – to lobby all members of the Senate and Congress for their supports of a comprehensive U.S. Health Care Reform Plan. We believe that millions of Americans will work together to urge the passage of an effective and comprehensive U.S. Health Care Reform Plan.

8. Q: Who is initiating this effort for Acupuncture?

A: The action is being initiated by Council of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Associations (CAOMA), American TCM Society (ATCMS), and United Alliance of NYS Licensed Acupuncturists (UANYSLA). We have formed a temporary working team to promote this effort.

We are looking forward to working with other TCM/acupuncture organizations on this issue, and welcome any individuals or the representatives of professional organizations or schools to join the team.

9. Q: How can I get more information about this effort?

A: Please visit websites at: www.ATCMS.org, or www.CAOMAUS.org, and www.acupunctureny.org.

10. Q: How can I share my suggestions or opinions on this issue with the coordinating team?

A: If you have any suggestions or opinions to share with us, please feel free to contact our Eastern Coast coordinator: Dr. Ling Zheng (Tel. 212-689-1773, Email: lingzheng62@yahoo.com), or Western Coast coordinators: Dr. Anyork Lee (Tel. 714-572-9481, Email: anyork@gmail.com) and Dr. Michelle Lau (Tel. 916-960-7000, Email: lautung@msn.com).