

A Time of Lost Opportunities? Or a Golden Opportunity for Acupuncture?

The AAAOM urgently needs you to make a donation of \$50-\$100 to AAAOM's Political Action Fund at www.aaaomonline.org. Here's why.

The late poet Robert Frost once wrote:

*Two roads diverged in a wood, and I,
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Most of us have taken the road less traveled by, and it has made all the difference in our lives. Now the nation's body politic faces a similar choice regarding health care. Some evidence suggests that Legislatures are taking the wrong road:

- Florida acupuncturists used to be able to treat all Personal Injury (PIP) cases without a referral. In 2008 Florida passed a law passed requiring them first to get a prescription from an MD or DC before treating any accident case.
- A 2009 Arkansas law just revoked use of the title Doctor of Oriental Medicine, gutted the scope of practice, canceled all rules passed by the Acupuncture Board, and gave all future rule-making authority to the Board of Medicine.
- The new California budget may stop paying for acupuncture under Medi-Cal.
- The *Navy Times* reports that the Defense Department has "no plans to add acupuncture as a Tricare or Tricare for Life benefit."

However, other evidence suggests a much different trend:

- In March AAAOM hired a new national lobbyist, Sam Brunelli, who talked at length with Senators Tom Harkin and Orrin Hatch. They all agreed that America has a sickness care system. Sam argued persuasively that if the Senators were really serious about establishing a true health care system, they should include licensed acupuncturists as providers. Who else knows preventive care better?
- WashingtonWatch.com reports in its daily tracking of Federal bills that 91% of those polled support HR 646, the Federal Acupuncture Coverage Act.
- The National Foundation of Women Legislators (NFWL), which represents America's 3300 elected women legislators, has asked AAAOM to participate in its next annual convention, September 3-7, 2009.
- US military MDs are using increasingly acupuncture to treat various disorders.

Sam Brunelli tells us that, quite simply, acupuncturists need more friends in state legislatures and in Congress. What happens in one state matters to the next and can affect passage of HR 646. We need to educate legislators what road to take when it comes to healthcare. Otherwise the AMA and Big Pharma will be the only voices heard.

That's why AAAOM asks for your financial support - to protect our rights on both a state and a national level. AAAOM urgently needs funds to pay our national lobbyist and to educate legislators at the next NFWL convention. Won't you please visit AAAOM's donations page at <http://www.aaaomonline.org/donations/>, and make a contribution of \$50-\$100 or more? **That** will make all the difference.