

FACT SHEET

AB 54 (Dymally)

CAOMA is the proud sponsor of AB 54. Here are some facts that you should know about CAOMA and about this bill.

- CAOMA is the umbrella organization made up of member associations including Chinese, Japanese, Korean acupuncture and Asian medicine associations.
- CAOMA has been one of the most active legislative advocacy organizations fighting for the medicine, the patients and the practitioners in California for many years.
- Acupuncture began with NO insurance coverage in California in 1977 and we have steadily won more and more recognition, acceptance and credibility in this state which has resulted in more and more insurance coverage for the medicine.
- As a profession, acupuncturists treat patients based on evidence-based medical need, not in the income of the patient.
- This bill has passed all policy committee hearings in both the Assembly and the Senate and has strong support among many legislators as well as several co-authors from both the Assembly and the Senate.
- This bill ensures that as many people as possible will have access and insurance coverage for Acupuncture. In order to make this happen, AB 54 would require health care service plan contracts and health insurance policies to provide coverage for services provided by a licensed acupuncturist.
- The required study performed by the California Health Benefits Review Program (CHBRP) found that possible increase in premiums in the private health insurance market would be negligible administrative costs levied by the insurance industry – which would be handed down to the insured at a rate of approximately \$0.03 - \$0.11/month. Further, the benefit would represent a significant savings in out-of-pocket expense for patients who are currently not covered for acupuncture – thereby making acupuncture more accessible to the patient and providing more patients for the practitioner.
- This bill would impact approximately 1.6 million Californians who currently are not covered by their insurance policies for acupuncture treatment.
- The only opposition who has come forward to oppose this bill (which has been in the Legislative pipeline since early 2007) are several insurance companies. No one from the profession or related groups have opposed this bill in Policy Committee hearings or otherwise.

- Once Acupuncture has become more widely available to patients and more broadly accepted in the mainstream, CAOMA will continue to press for more equitable reimbursement to the practitioner under the insurance health plans. It must be understood that this is an evolving process – several supplemental treatments such as TuiNa, Herbs, breathing exercises, etc., are still chargeable to the patient who has insurance plan coverage. Whether the insurance reimbursement is \$25, \$57 (Blue Shield), \$52-\$56 (Blue Cross), or \$100 – the acupuncturist has his own fee schedule by which he/she charges the patient. If the patient has insurance coverage, he or she is more likely to seek these services, regardless of what the reimbursement rate to the practitioner is -- and this helps the practitioner (more patients) and it helps the patient (coverage for services).

- Over the past several months during which CAOMA has worked on this bill, CAOMA has repeatedly invited all other acupuncture interest groups, including **Jeanie Kang, Christine Chang (AAAOM), Bill Mosca (CSOMA), Neal Miller (AIMS) to participate in the discussions about this bill.** To date, none of these groups has participated in working on any issues relating to the bill. CAOMA held several telephone conferences, some of which were participated in by some of these individuals - without any opposition or useful input to the bill.

- It is also very important to note the MANY supporters of this legislation within the community. These are organizations and a large number of individuals who are not affiliated with CAOMA. Some of the prominent organizations in support of the bill are:
 - California Certified Acupuncturist Association (CCAA)
 - American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)
 - National Guild of Oriental Medicine
 - National Federation of Chinese TCM Organizations
 - Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association (APAPA)
 - South Baylo University
 - University of East-West Medicine
 - Alhambra Medical University
 - Acupuncture & Integrated Medicine College - Berkeley
 - Southern California University of Health Science
 - American Institute of Chinese Medicine
 - American Institute of Acupuncture Orthopedics & Traumatology
 - Community Education Foundation
 - California Association of World Traditional Medicine
 - California Acupuncture Medical Association

We hope that this Fact Sheet on AB 54 will help to dispel some of the confusion, misinformation and myths surrounding this bill that have been circulating in some areas. Please contact us should you have any questions.