

# **Please Take Action on U.S. Health Care Reform Plan**

## *A letter to U.S. Acupuncturists*

Date: June 15, 2009

Dear Colleagues,

We are writing this letter to urge you to take action on a petition to include Acupuncture on the U.S. Health Care Reform Plan (Plan). As you know, President Barack Obama has been promoting his Health Care Reform Plan that will affect the rights and benefits of all medical providers -- including Acupuncturists. If the new Plan includes Acupuncture, it will greatly benefit our patients, patient care and Acupuncturists, and we will be able to achieve a level of parity in the mainstream health care market with other providers of primary health care. Otherwise, Acupuncturists will face more severe challenges and patients will suffer the consequences of exclusion to access to this medicine.

Currently, leaders in the U.S. Senate Health Committee (Senator Edward Kennedy and Senator Bernard Sanders) and Finance Committee (Senator Max Baucus and Senator Chuck Grassley) are working on legislative language for the Plan. This bill will be finalized in the next few weeks and introduced to Congress in September. We must try to convince these Congressional Leaders to consider the inclusion of Acupuncture as a covered health benefit in the Plan while they are still in the process of drafting the language. We invite all Acupuncturists, professional organizations, schools, our colleagues and friends to work with us in this effort, and take the following action immediately:

- (a) Write a petition letter to President Obama on behalf of 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 the 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 know that it is challenging to ask for the inclusion of Acupuncture in the Plan when the country is in fiscal crisis. But, we also know that the inclusion of Acupuncture in a comprehensive Plan will actually reduce costs to the Plan and to the patient. We are confident in the effectiveness and necessity of Acupuncture to any primary health care plan and we understand that it is essential that we take this opportunity to ensure that the Senate and Congress hear our voice. This effort will also help in any future legislative efforts we may undertake for this medicine and our patients.

The enclosed documents include: (1) The sample letter for the grassroots campaign for U.S. Health Care Reform Plan; (2) The contact information list for President Obama and Legislators; and (3) Questions & Answers regarding the grassroots campaign plan.

We are looking forward to working with all TCM/acupuncture organizations on this issue. Please feel free to contact us or visit our websites at: [www.ATCMS.org](http://www.ATCMS.org), and [www.CAOMAUS.org](http://www.CAOMAUS.org), as well as [www.acupunctureny.com](http://www.acupunctureny.com).

Sincerely,

Council of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Associations (CAOMA)  
American TCM Society (ATCMS)  
United Alliance of NYS Licensed Acupuncturists (UANYSLA)

Coordinators and Contact Information:

Coordinator's Name:  
Ling Zheng, L.Ac.  
Anyork Lee, L.Ac, OMD  
Michelle Lau, L.Ac., OMD

Tel. Number  
(212) 689-1773  
(714) 572-9481  
(916) 960-7000

Email  
[lingzheng62@yahoo.com](mailto:lingzheng62@yahoo.com)  
[anyork@gmail.com](mailto:anyork@gmail.com)  
[lautung@msn.com](mailto:lautung@msn.com)

## **Example Draft for Grassroots Letter Campaign**

### **U.S. Health Care Reform Plan**

*\*This is an example only, please personalize\**

*(Please type your name and address here)*

*(Date)*

To: *(Please type recipient's name and address here)*

#### **RE: Petition for Including Acupuncture in the U.S. Health Care Reform Plan**

Dear *(Recipient's name here)*:

I am writing this letter to ask for your support for the inclusion of Acupuncture as a part of primary medical services to be covered in the U.S. Health Care Reform Plan.

It is well known that Acupuncture is a safe, successful and cost-effective primary health care protocol, and a primary health care system that is routinely utilized by millions of Americans. Clinical studies have proven that to include Acupuncture as a source of primary health care will significantly increase the quality of medical care and markedly reduce conventional medical costs. Inclusion of Acupuncture in the U.S. Health Care Reform Plan clearly meets the specific goal of President Obama's health care reform and is in keeping with the best interests of Americans.

My personal experience with acupuncture...*(personal experiences adds to the letter, but it is up to your discretion)*

Thank you for your considering my opinion.

Sincerely,

*(Type your name and professional title here)*

*(Type your contact information including email, and phone number here)*

**Whom should you submit the letter to? How?**

*Please send the letter to President Barack Obama, Senator Edward M Kennedy (D-MA, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and pensions), 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), via postal mail and fax, or submit your comment form via their website.*

**1. President Barack Obama**

The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500  
Tel. (202) 456-1111  
Fax. (202) 456-2461  
Website: [www.whitehouse.gov/contact/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact/)

**2. Senator Edward M Kennedy**

317 Russell Senate Office Building  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  
Tel. (202) 224-4543  
Fax. (202) 224-2417  
Website: [www.kennedy.senate.gov/senator/contact.cfm](http://www.kennedy.senate.gov/senator/contact.cfm)

**3. Senator Christopher Dodd**

**448 Russell** Senate Office Building  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  
Tel. (202) 224-2832  
Fax. (202) 224-1083  
Website: [www.dodd.senate.gov/index.php?q=node/3130](http://www.dodd.senate.gov/index.php?q=node/3130)

**4. Senator Bernard Sanders**

332 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  
Tel. (202) 225-5141  
Fax. (202) 228-0776  
Website: [www.sanders.senate.gov/comments/](http://www.sanders.senate.gov/comments/)

**5. Senator Max Baucus**

511 Hart Senate Office Building  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  
Tel. (202) 224-2651  
Fax. (202) 224-9412  
Website: [www.baucus.senate.gov/contact/emailFORM.cfm?subj=issue](http://www.baucus.senate.gov/contact/emailFORM.cfm?subj=issue)

**6. Senator Chuck Grassley**

135 Hart Senate Office Building  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510  
Tel. (202) 224-3744  
Fax. (202) 224-6020  
Website: [www.grassley.senate.gov/contact.cfm](http://www.grassley.senate.gov/contact.cfm)

# 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 reduce the out-of-control skyrocketing health care costs effecting individuals, business, and government; (2) to protect families from economic ruin, resulting in bankruptcy or overpowering debt attributed to health care costs; (3) to guarantee choice of doctors and health plans; (4) to invest in prevention and wellness; (5) to improve patient safety and quality of care; (6) to assure affordable, quality health coverage for all Americans, including the 46 million-plus Americans who don't have any health insurance currently; (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 are discussing 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 what 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 of 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 the 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 see the attachment), 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 key persons in Congress and the Senate working on the Plan? How can I contact with them?**

**A:** The key persons who are working on legislative language include: Senator Edward M Kennedy (D-MA, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions), 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, 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 the end of July. Their contact information has been enclosed with this document.

**5. Q: What are the key points needed to express to those legislators on 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 a 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 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.

**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 the 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 will to those Legislators by the 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 support of a comprehensive U.S. Health Care Reform Plan. We believe that millions American 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 the Council of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Associations (CAOMA), the American TCM Society (ATCMS), and the 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](http://www.ATCMS.org), or [www.CAOMAUS.org](http://www.CAOMAUS.org), and [www.acupunctureny.org](http://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](mailto:lingzheng62@yahoo.com)), or Western Coast coordinators: Dr. Anyork Lee (Tel. 714-572-9481, Email: [anyork@gmail.com](mailto:anyork@gmail.com)) and Dr. Michelle Lau (Tel. 916-960-7000, Email: [lautung@msn.com](mailto:lautung@msn.com)).