

December 5, 2108
Health Policy Committee

Comments on SB 683

I am a licensed physician in Michigan who has been practicing acupuncture since 2008. I completed a 300 hour course in acupuncture in 2007, a fellowship in Integrative Medicine with UM in 2009, and have done extensive additional coursework and hands on training in various acupuncture techniques including Five Element acupuncture. I have been board certified in Emergency Medicine since 1996 and was the course director for 4th year MSU and UM medical students for over a decade.

I will not personally be restricted by SB 683 and I will qualify as a physician "allowed" to practice acupuncture under this bill. However, I believe, based on extensive familiarity with the training requirements for physicians, that this bill is flawed.

Licensed physicians in Michigan who have not completed a 300 hour course in acupuncture should not be restricted in the practice of acupuncture. The practice of acupuncture is clearly within the scope of practice of a physician.

Physicians spend 4 very intense years in medical school, and a minimum of 3 years in supervised practice as residents. Physicians routinely learn new skills, many of which are far more challenging than acupuncture, without completing 300 hours of coursework. The standard course for acupuncture for physicians costs \$11,000 and this year involves three multi day trips to Maryland. The training is great for physicians who want to devote a major part of their practice to acupuncture, but is overkill for physicians who want to focus on specific body systems or patient populations. A urologist treating bladder incontinence does not need 300 hours of training. A family physician offering acupuncture for chronic low back pain can provide effective relief for a majority of patients without spending \$11,000 and three trips to Maryland.

The latest regulations regarding the prescribing of opioids in Michigan has left many patients with chronic pain desperate for pain relief because physicians are cutting them off. I have found acupuncture to be a critical therapy for my patients who are dependant on opioids and who suffer with severe chronic pain. Tying the hands of Michigan physicians to protect the turf of licensed acupuncturists is both harmful to Michigan patients and totally unnecessary. Acupuncture, as the public understands the term, should not be a protected word reserved only for licensed acupuncturists.

I support the licensing of qualified acupuncturists, appreciate that the bill carves out exceptions for auricular acupuncture by NADA therapists for substance use disorder patients, but disagree with the restrictions that this bill places on Michigan physicians.

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