

Federation of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Regulatory Agencies

In 1997, several state Boards banned together to establish the Federation of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Regulatory Agencies (FAOMRA). FAOMRA was created to fill a void at the national level for representation of state regulatory issues by boards and agencies regulating the acupuncture and Oriental medicine profession. FAORMA has since expanded to include 14 member states and Quebec as an affiliate.

To broaden its utility, FAOMRA works closely with professional and certifying organizations such as the ACAOM, NCCAOM, CCAOM, AAOM and the AOMALLIANCE. FAOMRA convenes twice a year in conjunction with the meetings of the AAOM and AOMALLIANCE. The public is welcome to these meetings.

The mission of FAOMRA is “to provide an organization through which member agencies may work together to better assure the protection of the public through good communication about licensure, practice, regulatory activity and professional disciplinary action and to promote the delivery of quality healthcare to the public.”

To address the need for national standards, FAOMRA is working on identifying and developing levels of credentialing and competency standards for licensees of acupuncture and Oriental medicine. One of the Federation's accomplishments was to provide a framework for a national modular plan to define acceptable levels of licensure standards that meet individual state needs and ensure public protection. FAOMRA worked with the NCCAOM to ensure that these standards remain diverse, to embrace all traditions of acupuncture and Oriental medicine.

FAOMRA has offered states assistance in the past with controversial legislation. Last year, FAOMRA sent a letter in opposition to a bill in Washington, DC, that proposed to include acupuncture under the scope of practice of naturopaths. The Federation wrote, “FAOMRA has no desire or intention

of limiting another profession's scope of practice. FAOMRA believes, however, that professionals who use the term acupuncture in their practice without attaining the accepted recognized national standard for acupuncture and Oriental medicine training are misleading the public. It would be more appropriate for professionals that wish to use insertion of needles for therapeutic purposes, to identify their practices with different terminology”.

The Federation is constructing language to launch licensure by endorsement standards that will facilitate movement of licensees from state to state. There is also work on methods that will assist states in endorsing each other's credentialing of continuing education courses.

FAOMRA has started collecting data on disciplinary actions taken against licensees by state boards and other governmental authorities. This information will be posted on the Federation's website to be shared by state boards in their effort to properly screen licensure applicants.

The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) is currently collecting input from the profession to determine the level of support for a first-professional doctorate degree. Part of this process involved the creation of a Doctoral Task Force that held its first meeting in March 2004.

FAOMRA sent two of its members to sit on the Task Force to listen and collect information for further discussion at its April 2004 meeting in Hollywood, California. The two representatives will then report any information that FAOMRA wishes to express to ACAOM and the Task Force members at the next Task Force meeting. FAOMRA's two representatives are David Paton, L.Ac., from Maryland, and David Canzone, DOM, from New Mexico.

From that meeting ACAOM has stated; “As an integral part of the Task Force's recommendations relative to implementing the vision statement, the

Task Force is recommending that ACAOM seek a change of scope in its recognition by the US Department of Education from accrediting Master's Degree and Master's level diploma programs in AOM to accrediting the AOM curriculum and allowing programs to seek state authorization to grant either Master's or Doctoral degrees based on that program of study. This request is currently under review by the Commission.”

If ACAOM changes its scope as stated, than programs will need to seek state authorization to grant either Master's or Doctoral degrees based on that program of study. Whatever ACAOM decides, regulatory agencies will certainly be impacted by any changes. FAOMRA is committed to disseminating accurate information regarding this matter and will provide a forum for regulatory agencies to meet these challenges.

The Federation hopes to make a substantial difference in today's acupuncture community. Through its dedicated leadership of member states, FAORMA will continue to promote effective public policies that are uniform, but balanced. As the representative body of state boards, we intend to heed the needs of all states as well as respect and recognize the differences of all traditions.

We encourage all state boards or agencies to join our organization. We invite all interested parties to visit our website at www.faomra.com. The website is a work in progress. The website will offer links to state boards, their laws and contact personnel. Questions or concerns regarding our organization may be addressed to Penny Heisler (Maryland), Treasurer and Public Relations Chair, at 410-764-4766 or 1-800-530-2481 or to Rosemarie Ortiz (New Mexico), Secretary, at 505-476-7081.