

December 18, 2012

Dr. Donald E. Williamson  
201 Monroe Street Suite 1560  
Montgomery, Alabama 36104

Dear Dr. Williamson:

We hope that this letter finds you in good health! Alabama is one of a handful of states that does not have a law regulating the practice of acupuncture. Our organization has been working on legislation to license and regulate the practice of acupuncture in the state of Alabama.

Since the early 1970s, acupuncture has been increasingly popular in the United States. The 2002 National Health Interview Survey estimated about 2.1 million adults used acupuncture in the previous year, the same survey in 2007 estimated about 3.1 million adults used acupuncture in the previous year. An approximately 50% increase in 5 years!

There are now high quality studies showing acupuncture to be safe and effective for many medical conditions. For some conditions, such as chronic lower back pain, acupuncture has been found to be more effective than conventional treatments (DynaMed, UpToDate).

In June of 2012 we presented a request to the Alabama Board of Medical Examiners to support a Bill that would license and regulate the practice of acupuncture in Alabama. A copy of our power point presentation is available on our website at <http://aomalabama.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/ABMEAcupuncture2.pdf>. The ABME was very thoughtful and gracious but reluctant to take on this added responsibility. They voted not to oppose legislation supporting the creation of an independent acupuncture board.

Our research shows that acupuncture is currently regulated under a medical board in 17 states. It is regulated under its own, independent board in 15 states, and under other types of boards in 9 states. Acupuncture is regulated by the State Health Department in 3 states: Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Washington. Six states have no legislation regulating the practice of acupuncture.

In these times of tight budgets, we feel that the expense of establishing an independent board would be prohibitive. Currently, we estimate about 12 acupuncturists practicing in Alabama.

We request that you consider supporting the licensure of acupuncture under your bureau of regulation and licensure. We feel that the best way to accomplish this would be to adopt the standards of national accreditation organizations such as the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) or equivalent. 43 states currently require NCCAOM certification or passage of NCCAOM examinations as a requirement for acupuncture licensure. We are not interested in regulating acupuncture practiced under other licenses such as medical, chiropractic, or physical therapy.

We respectfully request to meet with you or your designee to discuss acupuncture legislation. We have a draft Bill that we could send to you for review. Alabama may be a little late to regulate acupuncture but we feel that we can still have the best legislation! This would allow access to a wonderful healing modality and protections for our citizens. Thank you for keeping us safe and healthy and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sarita Elizabeth Cox  
817 21<sup>st</sup>. Avenue  
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35401

