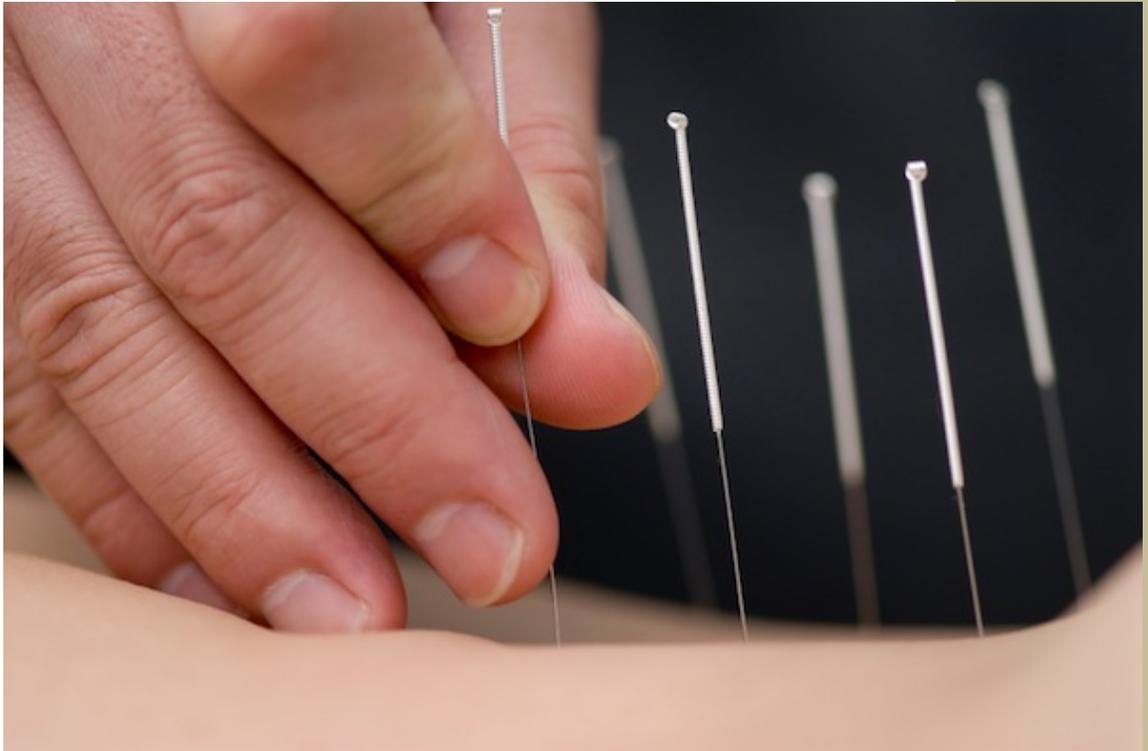


State of California

Board of Acupuncture

2013-2017



Strategic Plan

MEMBERS OF THE
CALIFORNIA ACUPUNCTURE BOARD

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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



On behalf of the California Acupuncture Board (CAB), I want to thank everyone involved in the strategic planning development process for their vision, strong effort and commitment to the CAB's role as regulator, facilitator, and leader in the field of Acupuncture in the State of California.

This plan reflects the CAB's commitment to work in partnership with the Acupuncture community including, the public, licensees, government, as well as educational providers. It is the result of input from and consultation with the Board staff, the public, and the profession.

This Strategic Plan is the cornerstone for the CAB as we move into the next five years of our mission as one of the leading regulatory agencies of the Acupuncture profession. It builds on some of the foundations of our Strategic Plan 2007-2012, which guided the CAB's work up until now. We believe the new plan offers a roadmap to the future with clear focus on building the basic framework for the regulation and oversight of the Acupuncture profession. We look forward to the mission ahead as we deliver on our Strategic Plan for 2013-2017 and meet the challenges and opportunities that are ahead.

NIAN PENG "Michael" SHI, L.Ac.

CHAIR

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ABOUT THE CALIFORNIA ACUPUNCTURE BOARD

The California Acupuncture Board (CAB) has evolved over the years as a state licensing entity for acupuncturists and progressed into a semi-autonomous decision-making body. Initially, in 1972, acupuncture was regulated by the Acupuncture Advisory Committee under the jurisdiction of The Board of Medical Examiners (i.e., Medical Board of California). In 1980, the Committee was replaced with the Acupuncture Examining Committee within the Division of Allied Health Professions. In 1999, the Committee became the Acupuncture Board, solely responsible for licensing and regulating the practice of acupuncture and Oriental medicine in the State of California.

The primary responsibility of the Acupuncture Board is to protect California consumers from incompetent, and/or fraudulent practice through the enforcement of the Acupuncture Licensure Act and the Board's regulations. Under the Department of Consumer Affairs, the Board promotes safe practice through the improvement of educational training standards, continuing education, administering the California Acupuncture License Examination (CALE), enforcement of the Business and Professions (B&P) Code, and public outreach. The Board establishes and maintains entry standards of qualification and conduct within the acupuncture profession, primarily through its authority to license. The Acupuncture Licensure Act commences with the B&P Code, Section 4925 et seq., and the Board is authorized to adopt regulations that appear in Title 16, Division 13.7, of the California Code of Regulations (CCR). The Board regulates over 11,000 licensed acupuncturists and establishes standards for approval of institutions and colleges that offer education and training programs in the practice of acupuncture and Oriental medicine.

The Board consists of seven members with a public majority (i.e., 4 public members and 3 professional members). Five members are appointed by the Governor, one by the Speaker of the Assembly and one by the Senate Pro Tempore. The Legislature has mandated that the acupuncture members of the Board must represent a cross-section of the cultural backgrounds of the licensed members of the profession, which assists Board members in their critical role as policy and decision makers in disciplinary hearings, approval of new schools, contracts, budget issues, legislation and regulatory proposals.

Committees serve as an essential component of the full Board to address specific issues referred by the public or recommended by staff. Committees are composed of at least two Board members who are charged with gathering public input, exploring alternatives to the issues, and making a recommendation to the full Board.

The Acupuncture Board has four committees as follows:

Committee	Responsibilities
Executive Committee	Address issues related to expenditures/revenue/fund condition, executive officer selection/evaluation, legislation/regulations, committee policy/procedures, and special administrative projects.
Education Committee	Address issues related to acupuncture educational standards, school application and approval process, tutorial programs, and continuing education.
Examination Committee	Address issues related to development and administration contracts, administration, and miscellaneous issues.
Enforcement Committee	Address enforcement issues, propose regulations, policies, and standards to ensure compliance with the Board’s statutes and regulations.

The Board appoints an Executive Officer to oversee a staff of seven full-time staff and three part-time staff that support six major Board functions: licensing, exam, education – enforcement and school oversight, enforcement, and regulatory.

- Licensing Unit is responsible for issuing licenses and processing initial applications and renewals, fingerprint/live scans, ensuring continuing education compliance and other related functions.
- Exam Unit processes and evaluates all exam applications from graduates of California approved schools and accredited foreign schools, processes ADA special accommodations, oversees exam development and actual exam offered twice a year, releases exam results, analyzes results and posts to

the Board's website exam statistics by school, first time, and repeat test takers.

- Education has two units: School Oversight and Enforcement. The School Oversight Unit approves and monitors schools and conducts site visits. The Education Enforcement Unit monitors schools for compliance, approves continuing education courses and providers, and conducts audits of continuing education compliance among licensees.
- Enforcement Unit processes and investigates complaints or conviction reports. Cases are referred for further investigation and evaluation by subject matter experts (SMEs) for standards of care and patient safety. The Executive Officer determines which disciplinary actions to pursue or issues citations based on the results of investigations. Disciplinary actions are posted on the website for consumer protection.
- Regulatory unit prepares regulatory packages, monitors legislation, and pursues Board sponsored legislation.
- Administration unit handles purchasing, personnel, fiscal duties, and travel reimbursement for the office.

Together, all of these functions protect the health and safety of Californians. Enforcement efforts protect consumers from licensed and unlicensed individuals who engage in fraudulent, negligent, or incompetent acupuncture practice. Education oversight and enforcement protects consumers from unqualified licensees providing care that may harm health and public safety. Similarly, the California Acupuncture Licensing Exam protects the public by evaluating the competence of those seeking to be licensed to practice in the California.

The Board's acupuncture curriculum requirements include completion of 3,000 hours of theoretical and clinical training from a Board approved school within the United States or accredited foreign school or completion of the Board approved Tutorial Training Program.

To be eligible to sit for the CALE, applicants must demonstrate that they have either graduated from a Board approved tutorial program or completed the required coursework from either a Board approved school or accredited foreign school.

Consumers are also protected by the Board's ongoing professional requirements for licensees. Licensees are required to renew their license every two years and are

required to complete 50 hours of continuing education as a condition of licensure renewal.

The Board is committed to fulfill its statutory and regulatory mandates, mission and vision. The Board continually re-evaluates its business operations and systems, improves its infrastructure and explores new ways of doing business and delivering its services. The Board is continually committed to increasing the quality and availability of services it offers to stakeholders.

SIGNIFICANT BOARD ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As a part of strategic planning, the Board evaluated its previous strategic plan goals and identified which objectives were accomplished. The following are the significant Board accomplishments since the 2007 strategic plan was adopted.

Adopted Regulations Improving Continuing Education Standards

In 2007-2008, the Board evaluated continuing education standards and implemented the following regulatory changes:

- Categorized all continuing education coursework requirements into two categories. Category one are coursework requirements related to clinical matters or the actual provision of health care to patients. Category two is coursework unrelated to clinical matters or the actual provision of patient care. There is no limitation in the number of category one coursework that can be counted towards the continuing education requirement. Category two coursework is limited to five hours that can count toward the requirements.
- Increased the number of continuing education hours from 30 to 50 hours every two years. Although this change was approved by the Board in 2006, the work was completed and implemented during 2007-2008.
- Clarified and defined eligible distance learning coursework that would meet continuing education requirements. A streamline application process for distance learning was created that required an online course for providers to submit the exam in addition to the regular C.E. application requirements. Distance learning was allowed to account for 50% of continuing education requirements.

Enforcement and Licensure Regulatory Changes

- In 2010, the Board implemented retroactive fingerprinting requirements for licensees who were initially licensed prior January 1, 2001, as a condition of license renewal.
- The Board adopted regulations in 2011 to create a licensure exemption for Sponsored Free Health Care Events. This is a pending regulation package.

- In 2013, the Board approved the regulatory requirement that Acupuncturists must include their license number in all of their advertisements. This is a pending regulatory package.
- In 2012, the Board adopted continuing education requirements that licensees must take no less than four hours of professional ethics coursework. This is a pending regulatory package.

Improved the Board's Education Enforcement Process

- The Board resumed site visits for schools seeking initial program approval and education enforcement. The site visit team was reengineered to include a licensed subject matter expert or licensed Board member to assist in the evaluation of curriculum standards compliance.
- The Board increased the number of continuing education desk audits to a random sampling of 5% of licensees to ensure compliance.
- The Education Enforcement Unit is collecting data by school on exam application irregularities including questionable transcripts, transfer credit violations, and abuse of course-in-progress credits.

Improved Administration of the California Acupuncture Licensing Exam (CALE)

- The Board conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the August 2012 California Acupuncture Licensing Exam (CALE) and determined it to be validated, credible, and reliable, and not the cause of the low pass rate.
- The Board adjusted the exam calendar to allow more time to evaluate transcripts to ensure accuracy and to meet exam administrators' preparation timeline.
- The Board tightened exam security to ensure fair testing.
- The Board posted multi-lingual exam guides to the website to ensure applicant understanding of the exam process and security protocols.

Improved Board Administration

- The Board improved customer service to Board callers by shifting call center responsibility to the Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA)'s Consumer Information Center. This allows the Board to better handle the high call volume and provide callers with improved service by minimizing voicemail overflow and call wait times.
- In November 2012, the Board expanded stakeholder accessibility to Board meetings by webcasting all Sacramento-based public meetings to maximize licensee and consumer access to Board discussions, decisions, and actions.

OUR VISION

A California with the greatest health and well-being through access to excellent primary health care in acupuncture.

OUR MISSION

To protect, benefit, and inform the people of California by exercising the licensing, regulatory, and enforcement mandates of the Acupuncture Licensure Act and Acupuncture Regulations.

OUR VALUES

CONSUMER PROTECTION

We make effective and informed decisions in the best interest and for the safety of Californians.

EXCELLENCE

We support outstanding achievement in our employees, driven by a passion for quality, as we strive for continuous improvement. Teamwork is demonstrated at all levels through cooperation and trust by working with and soliciting the ideas and opinions of stakeholders, consumers, and staff.

RESPECT

We value and celebrate California's ever-changing cultural and economic diversity. We are responsive, considerate, and courteous to all stakeholders.

LEADERSHIP

We strive to set the standard for professional regulation by creating, communicating, and implementing inspirational visions for results.

SERVICE

We serve the needs of the public with integrity and through meaningful communication. We are professional and responsive to the needs of our stakeholders.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We operate transparently and encourage public participation in our decision-making whenever possible. We accept personal responsibility for our actions, exemplifying high ethical standards, always striving to improve our effectiveness.

INTEGRITY

We are honest, fair, and respectful in our treatment of everyone by honoring the dignity of each individual. We foster long-term relationships with stakeholders and employees through open, authentic communication, earning trust by demonstrating a commitment to ethical conduct and responsibility.

GOAL 1: LICENSING

Promote licensing standards to protect consumers and allow reasonable access to the profession.

- 1.1** Work with the Department of Consumer Affairs executive team to resolve cashiering issues causing licensing delays.*

**Objectives for each goal area are listed in order of priority.*

GOAL 2: ENFORCEMENT

Protect the health and safety of consumers through the enforcement of the laws and regulations governing the practice of acupuncture.

2.1 Review disciplinary guidelines and regulatory standards to determine if standards need revision.

2.2 Strengthen the Board's enforcement authority through Implementation of Uniform Standards Related to Substance Abuse and Recommended Guidelines for Disciplinary Orders and Probation, and the Consumer Protection Enforcement Initiative.

2.3 Seek legislation to expand non-complaint based clinic inspection authority to further public protection.

2.4 Determine feasibility of strengthening the recertification process for reinstatement of an inactive license to further public safety. Promulgate regulations to do so, if found feasible.

GOAL 3: EDUCATION

Advance higher education standards to increase the quality of education and ensure consumer protection.

3.1 Evaluate curriculum standards to ensure professional qualification and public safety. The Board will evaluate whether financial standards for schools are needed.

3.2 To ensure that students are qualified to successfully complete Acupuncture training programs, the Board will explore increasing initial licensure qualifications to a Bachelor's degree or set a score for the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT).

3.3 The Education Committee will evaluate school courses and course materials to ensure compliance with the Board's curriculum requirements.

3.4 Promulgate regulations to require international applicants and students attending non-English track schools to pass the TOEFL exam before being eligible to sit for the California Acupuncture Licensing Exam (CALE).

3.5 The Education Committee will evaluate the feasibility of enhancing school curriculum regulations by adding a required course in Standardized Acupuncture terminology.

GOAL 4: PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Improve continuing education and examination standards to ensure excellence in practice and promote public safety.

4.1 Evaluate the approved continuing education course list and create a defined scope for continuing education coursework that focuses on improving practice knowledge, best practices, and updated research.

4.2 Formalize the continuing education audit process of the Education Committee's review of potentially non-compliant continuing education courses and providers.

4.3 Review past occupational analysis studies to identify improvements to the evaluation process and implement those improvements during the next analysis.

4.4 Evaluate the CALE exam to ensure continued test validity and security.

GOAL 5: OUTREACH

Inform consumers, licensees, and stakeholders about the practice and regulation of the acupuncture profession.

5.1 Form a Licensee Education Committee to create educational materials for licensees and a "What You Need to Know" educational series that will be accessible from the website.

5.2 Increase outreach to interested stakeholders by leveraging cost-effective technology to increase understanding of the Acupuncture profession and the Board.

5.3 Work collaboratively with state and national professional associations to increase awareness of the Board's functions.

5.4 Educate stakeholders on requirements of the Affordable Care Act and the implications for electronic records management.

5.5 Modify the Board's website to ensure accessibility and increase usability.

GOAL 6: ADMINISTRATION

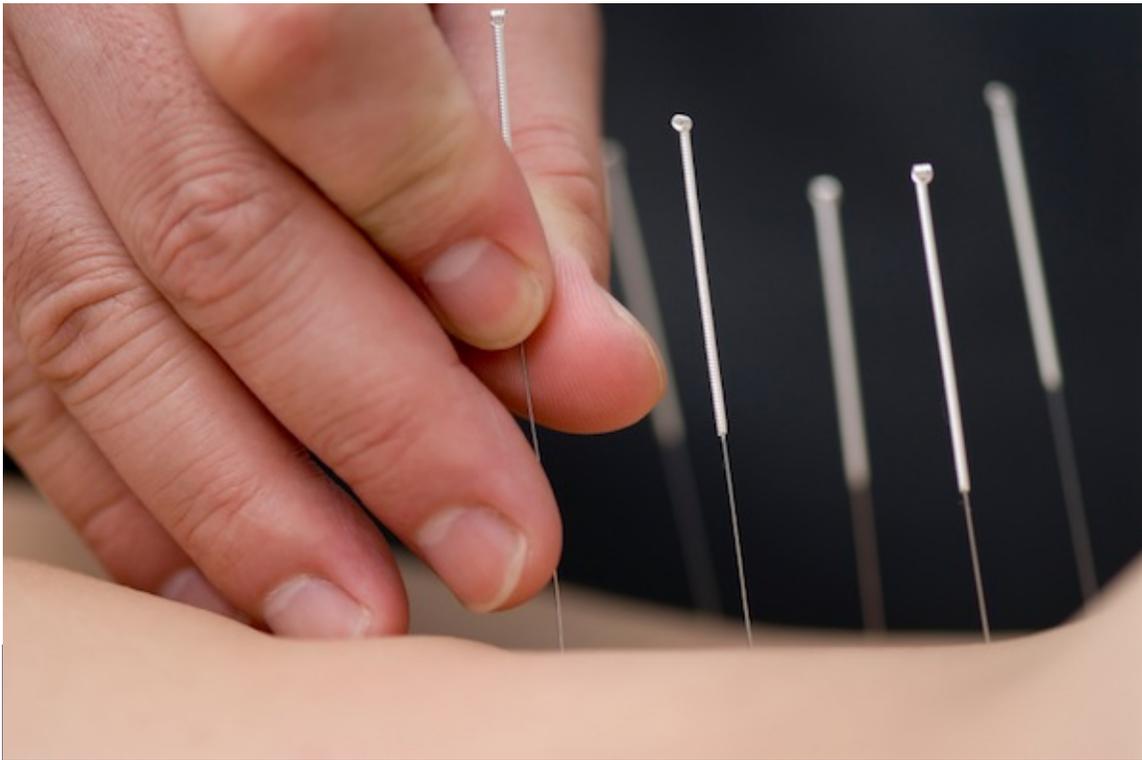
Build an excellent organization through proper Board governance, effective leadership, and responsible management.

6.1 Ensure adequate staffing levels within all areas of the Board to fulfill the Board's mandate and achieve Board goals.

6.2 Establish an ongoing working report of pending regulatory projects and priorities to inform the Board, the legislature, and the public of the ongoing status of these projects.

6.3 Create targeted training for new Board members to provide further details on Board and government processes.

6.4 Develop desk manuals for all Board functions to ensure proficiency, performance, and for succession planning.



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