



Resolution on adopting the NCCAOM exams for CA licensure to replace CALE:
February 23rd, 2020

The California State Oriental Medical Association (CSOMA), would like to announce again its support of adopting the NCCAOM exam for CA Licensure to replace the California Licensing Exam, CALE. By adopting the NCCAOM exam, acupuncturists would align themselves with the “gold standard” of professional competency, as is seen in other medical practitioners. Per the NCCAOM “A national board certification [...] is the hallmark of excellence in acupuncture and oriental medicine (AOM). NCCAOM certification makes an important statement about professional competence that is recognized by regulatory bodies, third-party payers, the profession and the public.”

Now more than ever our patients need us in hospitals and programs such as the Veteran’s Association, Medicare and other national healthcare institutions. The need for our profession to be engaged in a variety of settings will continue to increase, and we need to be positioned as a profession to be available to fill the needs of patients at a large scale level. With the current pandemic the world is facing, there have been more conversations than ever in recent history about the strength of our medicine and the need for its widespread availability. January 21st, 2020 marked a historic time for the L.Ac. profession. The Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) announced its decision to cover acupuncture for low back pain. This is a major step forward for our profession, not only for job development, but also in being recognized as an integral part of the medical provider community.

What continues to hold us back, however, is having multiple licensing requirements, different professional titles for acupuncturists and no set credentialing national body for our profession as a whole. This not only confuses our counterparts, but also sets us apart from our colleagues in the professional workplace. National Board Certification is the standard across many healthcare professions. CSOMA supports the NCCAOM Certification as this gold standard. The benefits far outweigh the limitations set by not creating a streamlined way to enter the standard of care. Our profession is integrating, and we must be positioned to grow so we are not left behind. We as a profession have the ability to open the doors for jobs with federal agencies, hospitals and clinics across the US.

In early January 2018, CSOMA’s Public Policy Advisory Committee first introduced their position statement on the NCCAOM Exam. CSOMA would like to reinstate this position to our members and the public. We hope to foster a collaborative effort with other acupuncture professional associations to support the advancement of adopting the NCCAOM Certification as a gold standard of criteria for the AOM profession. CSOMA will continue to advocate for and provide more information to Diplomats as the bill progresses.

From our 2018 statement:

As a professional association, we believe a national board certification in any or all of these practice areas is the hallmark of excellence in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (AOM). NCCAOM certification makes an important statement about professional competence that is recognized by regulatory bodies, third-party payers, the profession and the public.

WHEREAS the California Acupuncture Board (CAB) requested that DCA's Office of Professional Examination Services (OPES) complete a comprehensive review of the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine's (NCCAOM) examination program. The NCCAOM examinations consist of four exam modules: Foundations of Oriental Medicine (FOM), Biomedicine (BIO), Acupuncture with Point Location (ACPL), and Chinese Herbology (CH);

WHEREAS the purpose of the OPES review was to evaluate the suitability of the NCCAOM examinations as part of the requirements for licensure as an acupuncturist in California. OPES convened a panel of licensed California acupuncturists to serve as subject matter experts (SMEs) to review the content of each of the four NCCAOM examinations and to compare this content with the test plan for the California Acupuncture Licensure Examination (CALE), as based on the 2015 California Acupuncture Occupational Analysis (CAOA) performed by OPES;

WHEREAS the OPES audit found that the NCCAOM examinations adequately assess most, but not all, of the general areas of entry-level California acupuncture practice (e.g., acupuncture treatment, herbal therapy, diagnostic impressions, etc) identified in the 2015 CAO;

WHEREAS the OPES audit found that the NCCAOM examinations do not assess California-specific areas of entry level acupuncture practice, including content related to the laws, regulations, and practice requirements specific to California.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that CSOMA supports the adoption of the NCCAOM exam modules in conjunction with a California-specific supplemental exam.

Additional Information/Resources:

1. National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM®) Fact Sheet: Information for California Licensed Acupuncturists and Other Interested Stakeholders about the NCCAOM Testing and Certification Program - January 8, 2018
<http://www.nccaom.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/NCCAOM%20Fact%20Sheet%20CA%20Updated.pdf>
2. Review of the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Examinations by the California Acupuncture Board - January 2016
http://www.acupuncture.ca.gov/pubs_forms/nccaom_audit.pdf
3. Q & A on Follow-Up Questions Submitted to the NCCAOM Based on the Audit, and How the NCCAOM Can Provide Exam Development and Administrative Services to the CAB for Purposes of Licensure: A Presentation to the CAB - June 11, 2016
<http://www.nccaom.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/NCCAOM%20QA%20for%20CAB%20Meeting%20June%2011%202016.pdf>
4. Center for Medicare Services: Decision Memo for Acupuncture for Chronic Low Back Pain - January 2020
<https://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/nca-decision-memo.aspx?NCAId=295>

Sincerely,



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