

COVID-19 Acupuncture Town Hall

March 24, 2020

<https://www.crowdcast.io/e/covid-19-virtual-town>

hosted by the California State Oriental Medicine Association (CSOMA)



Carl Schwartz

Chief Customer Officer, Lhasa OMS

Lhasaoms.com

Medical supply companies such as Lhasa OMS are remaining open as essential suppliers. There has been an increase in acupuncture needle production, so the supply is available. There is an increase in demand in herbal formulas, while some formulas are harder to get, many herbal formulas are available. Lhasa is working to find new suppliers and partners to ensure product availability. Suppliers are also working to support education such as instructional webinars and other information resources. In the coming weeks, Lhasa OMS will have a direct patient prescription portal, for ordering herbs, through practitioner accounts, to reduce the handling of products. Suppliers and distributors are doing their best, working together to make sure that the products are available.

Dr. David W. Miller, MD, LAc

Chair, American Society of Acupuncturists

ASAcu.org

ASA is working with other organizations as a member of the Integrative Health Policy Consortium (IHPC) which advocates for integrative healthcare providers. IHPC is reviewing the stimulus package, to ensure that “all state and/or national licensed healthcare practitioners”

are included. ASA is also working with NCCAOM on sharing resources to provide for practitioners. Such resources will be posted on our website, along with NCCAOM's.

While laws are different based on your county or state, to reduce the spread of the virus, acupuncturists are asked to use your professional judgment. Treat only if you have proper Personal Protection Equipment (gloves, mask, gown, & eye protection) and with such equipment, to provide only essential treatments, and following Universal Precaution Guidelines. Essential treatments are those where patients would otherwise be hospitalized or seen in the ER if they had to wait 2 weeks without your care, or if patients might need to escalate opioid use, or similarly suffer. Silent or asymptomatic carriers of the virus can spread the virus. We should approach all patients as if they were carriers. While certainly not the same, we recommend telemedicine.

ASA is also working with the Academic Consortium to rebrand the language of social distancing. To prevent the spread of the virus, we need to be "physically distanced" but we need "social solidarity and social innovation" to support each other to get through this.

ASA will continue to advocate for LAc inclusion, especially those in grants or income sources to help our practitioners.

Mina Larson, M.S., MBA, CAE
CEO, National Certification Commission for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine
NCCAOM.org

NCCAOM is working with its 18,000+ NCCAOM certified practitioners to ensure ease of certification and recertification during these unprecedented times. NCCAOM is working with Diplomates to ensure ease restrictions regarding PDAs for recertification.

[For NCCAOM Candidates:](#) NCCAOM offers exams throughout the year. Due to the closure of Pearson VUE testing centers until April 16th at earliest, NCCAOM is exploring a more flexible option of year-round Adaptive Testing starting May 18, 2020. Registration for the adaptive exam will begin on March 30, 2020.

NCCAOM is working with the ASA, to create informational webinars and working with lobbyists to decipher the stimulus plan to find assistance for acupuncturists.

Marilyn Allen
Founder, American Acupuncture Council
acupuncturecouncil.com

Telemedicine provides a way for practitioners to reach out to their patients. With COVID-19, [HIPAA regulations have been relaxed](#), systems such as Facetime and Skype are viable options, for the time being.

Requirements for Telemedicine:

- Patients must be in the state where you are licensed.
- Some states require consent forms
- Sessions must be patient-initiated
- Proper equipment is necessary to ensure medical records must be maintained and be secured
- Evaluation & Management Teleconference codes
 - 99241 for 5-10 minutes face to face evaluations for established patients,
 - 99242 for 11-20 minutes face to face evaluation for established patients
 - 99243 for over 21 minutes face to face evaluations
 - These codes can be used only once every 7 days
 - The duration of the time is to be used for evaluation & management

AAC will be hosting additional webinars by Sam Collins regarding Telemedicine.

Practitioners are advised to be cautious. When asked if a patient can sue a practitioner for contracting COVID-19, the question comes back to “negligence” when it comes to malpractice. Treat all patients as if they are silent carriers.

Dr. Robyn “Ra” Adcock, DACM, LAc
Executive Director, California State Oriental Medical Association
csomaonline.org

The California Acupuncture Board (CAB) Update: CAB has COVID-19 Resources on their website. CAB licensing and renewals are being processed as normal. Because live CEUs are being canceled, license renewals can be sent in with credits unfinished at this time.

We understand that students need clinical hours to complete schooling. ACAOM and CCAOM are working with the schools to continue education programs, especially the exploration of telemedicine for the clinic hours.

Integrative Medicine Services at Univ of California, San Francisco Hospitals Update: all non-life saving ambulatory care has been stopped. To prevent contamination, limited personnel are

allowed into patient rooms. Limiting contact time is the best way to avoid the spreading of the virus. [When using the N95 Facemask, assure user fit.](#) Telemedicine is used at UCSF. Patients are grateful to be connected to their practitioners. This allows for continuity and consistency of care.

Questions & Answers:

How do we contribute our resources to the sickest of patients?

While we cannot jump into integrative medicine teams at hospitals without many institutional steps, we can support respiratory health after the patient has recovered from COVID-19, as their respiratory systems will need continued care.

Practitioners are asked to write up case studies to discuss what worked or didn't work.

IHPC is advocating for greater research funding. As this continues, we need to think innovatively. See below, "How do we use Telemedicine to benefit our patients."

Diagnostic language

Using our differential diagnosis, we can avoid non-evidenced based efficacy statements.

How do we use Telemedicine to benefit our patients?

Don't undervalue the benefits of the therapeutic encounter. Through telemedicine, we are able to make connections with our patients. Acupuncturists can advise patients on herbal therapy, dietary therapy, stress management, exercises such as qigong or taiqi, self-acupressure or gua sha. As we continue to navigate the world of telemedicine, we will share more about its use and how we can best help our patients using this system.

Insurances

Loss of wage insurance coverage will depend on your state and your business incorporation status. Short term and long term unemployment, for those who are eligible, can apply to start the process.

ASA will work with IHPC to track legislative updates

As we think of the big picture, practitioners can help in many ways, from collecting masks, donating blood, delivering food to those in need.

As a community of 36,000, we will bring you more resources and share what we all need to know. Thank you to CSOMA for hosting this Acupuncture COVID-19 Town Hall.

Please consider contributing to CSOMA (csomaonline.org/donate) and support your state acupuncture association to support the ASA.

Links and Resources:

Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine (2020 March 17) ACAOM Updates on COVID-19. Retrieved from:

<http://acaom.org/2020/03/17/acaom-update-on-covid-19-novel-coronavirus/>

American Society of Acupuncturists (2020, March 18) ASA COVID-19 Updates and Recommendations. Retrieved from:

https://www.asacu.org/wp-content/uploads/March-17-ASA-Covid-Announcement_post-review.pdf

American Society of Acupuncturists (2020, February 29) ASA COVID-19 Information Sheet.

Retrieved from: <https://www.asacu.org/wp-content/uploads/ASA-COVID-19-Info-Sheet.pdf>

California Acupuncture Board (2020, March) COVID-19 Acupuncture Stakeholder Updates.

Retrieved from: https://www.acupuncture.ca.gov/pubs_forms/covid_board_update.pdf

California Acupuncture Board (2020, March) FAQs for California Licensees. Retrieved from

https://www.acupuncture.ca.gov/pubs_forms/covid_lic_faq.pdf

Centers for Disease Control (2020, March) COVID-19. Retrieved from:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Council of Colleges for Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine. (2020, March) CCAOM COVID-19

Member Resources. Retrieved from: <https://stage.ccaom.org/ccaom/Test.asp>

NCCAOM (2020, March 18) COVID-19 Emergency Response Efforts: What Acupuncturists Need to Know. Retrieved from:

<https://www.nccaom.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/3-18-2020-NCCAOM-Announcement-to-Diplomates-Regarding-the-Coronavirus-Outbreak.pdf>

NCCAOM (2020, March 23) NCCAOM Candidate Update. Retrieved from:

<https://www.nccaom.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/Exam%20Administration%20Change%20Announcement%20for%20Applicants%20March%2024,%202020.pdf>

Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) (2020, March 23) Notification of Enforcement Discretion for Telehealth Remote Communications During the COVID-19 Nationwide Public Health Emergency. Retrieved from:

https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/special-topics/emergency-preparedness/notification-enforcement-discretion-telehealth/index.html?fbclid=IwAR36IBgo7VXtd67MQ_m9ti7KTBNBSVDVqYQUkEkdIbks9jGgpOswQt2M7Zk