

Dr. Rhonda Struble

Dr. Struble: Good morning. My name is Dr. Rhonda Struble. I'm a Ph.D. in traditional Chinese medicine, and I'm here today to represent the Michigan Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.

I'm an acupuncture researcher at the University of Michigan, guest lecturer at Michigan University as well as Michigan State University, and I have been practicing here in Michigan for the past several years, and would like to speak on behalf of my profession in supporting the regulation of acupuncture here in this state.

House Bill 5205 has been introduced in order to regulate the practice of acupuncture in an effort to maintain and improve the quality of treatment in our profession and to protect the public welfare.

Acupuncture and alternative therapies are growing at an unprecedented rate in this country and are starting to play a major role in our health care environment.

According to the National Institute of Health's recently released study, 75 percent of people were found to have used complementary medicine in the last year and 36 percent use it as part of their regular health care maintenance.

In the United States, the practice of acupuncture is a regulated medical service within 41 states. Michigan must not be left behind in its ability to protect citizens from ill-trained and unqualified practitioners.

The FDA now classifies acupuncture needles as class 2 medical devices and requires labeling for one time use by practitioners who are legally authorized to use them.

It is vitally important for the health and safety of the public that class 2 medical devices be used only in the hands of properly trained and qualified practitioners.

The trend in the health care of the United States is to raise standards, especially in the rampant infectious diseases in today's society.

Just recently in Ontario a health care clinic was closed down for distributing same-use needles to over 1,700 Canadians. The Ontario Health Department called in over 1,500 individuals to be tested for HIV and Hepatitis.

This devastating reality was documented by the Ontario press, and the Michigan Association of Acupuncture does not want to see such unscrupulous and deadly practices take place here in Michigan.

This is why we are asking for your support to move Michigan forward in the protections of citizens in health care.

The practice of acupuncture is more than merely placing needles at various points of the body for specific conditions. Acupuncture is a 3,000 year old or more system of medicine that's based on principles of homeostasis and requires years of training and experience before a full comprehensive knowledge of diagnosis and treatment can be attained.

The standards established by the National Commission of Acupuncture requires that the full value and safety of acupuncture can be realized by the public. Any lower standards would place our citizens in jeopardy of substandard and unsafe treatments.

When a citizen of Michigan opens up the phone book to find an acupuncture practitioner, they are probably not aware that there is no regulation of acupuncture in this state, including training, standard of care, defined scope of practice, or guidelines for professional conduct.

It is imperative that Michigan join the other 41 states in this country to consider the National Council of Acupuncture's standards for eligibility as the minimum standards for safe practice in our profession.

We as acupuncturists must be the highest level of professional competence, academic ability, and ethical standards that protect the public welfare and the individual practitioner. So please don't miss the point, I'm here today to request your support in regulating the practice of acupuncture for the safety of our public. Thank you.