

Fit Acupuncture

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The Board of the Washington East Asian Medicine Association is diligently working to strengthen and protect the practice of Acupuncture for all of the Licensed Acupuncturists in Washington State. The board is made up of a group of very dedicated and passionate people who care deeply about the future of our medicine, spending hour upon hour of their own time to work toward a common goal of ensuring that we as Acupuncturist have a profession that we may call our own.

The nature of all living things is to grow, change, and evolve. According to the process of evolution by natural selection those characteristics that help an organism to survive and reproduce are those that become more common in successive generations. Natural selection is influenced by many internal and external forces that ultimately decide the fate of specific characteristics of an organism and ultimately of the organism itself.

Our Association is evolving and there are many forces at work that are influencing the changes that are around us. Some of those forces come from within our organization such as our desire to establish and clarify our role in healthcare, to add modalities to our scope of practice, gain further recognition from insurers, and educate the public about what we do amongst a broad and challenging healthcare system.

Other forces that shape our Association come externally from groups and institutions looking to capitalize on the use of modalities that are specific to our style of medicine. The hard work of many has brought legitimacy to Acupuncture and the many techniques associated and now there are groups that wish to include these techniques in their scope of practice with very little understanding of their use, potentially risking injury to patients and damaging the credibility of our profession.

In order to help protect our profession we have to evolve. We have to accept that there are forces around us that are changing the environment that we exist in and understand that by adapting to create a clear and concise message about who we are and what we do will make us strong. Evolution doesn't care what style of acupuncture you do, or what system you use to diagnose and treat, the only thing that matters is a single clear voice so that those who don't know the difference can understand.

It is with this intent that we have come to the consensus that the name of our organization does not clearly identify what it is that we do, and may even be offensive to

some of our members. We must stand up and work together to speak with a clear and unified voice that tells the public, the insurers, and the rule makers that “this” is who we are and “this” is what we do, in language that they can understand. We must overcome the nuances that diversify us and understand that we all seek a common goal to share this beautiful and whole medicine with those who need it and to be respected while we carry on the traditions of an ancient medicine in a modern and confused environment that thrives on simplicity of message.

The practice and acceptance of acupuncture has significantly evolved over the past decade. Acupuncture students are graduating with an entry level doctoral degree, medical doctors are at a place where they are recommending patients try it for a variety of problems, and insurers are covering the services. It is important that we work in conjunction with this trend and move away from terminology that further identifies our practice as being “alternative” and embrace language that promotes a collaborative and professional approach to healthcare.

The reasons outlined above are why we need to carefully consider how it is that we are identified as a professional association and why we should very seriously consider the implications of the terms and message that describe who we are. Our current name was a step in our evolution and the hard work done by those who helped to change it was an important piece of where we are now, however the environment around us has changed and in order to carry on we must evolve to meet those challenges. Now is the time to rise up and overcome those challenges by identifying ourselves in a clear and concise way that everyone can understand.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tyler Martin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tyler Martin, L.Ac.