

**PRESENTATION OF THE
BOARD OF ACUPUNCTURE**

TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE
Regular Session of 2013

Friday, February 1, 2013
8:30 a.m.

**TESTIMONY ON HOUSE BILL NO. 845, RELATING TO THE USE OF THE
DOCTOR OF ACUPUNCTURE TITLE.**

TO THE HONORABLE DELLA AU BELATTI, Chair,
AND MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE:

My name is Michael Howden and I am the Chairperson of the Board of Acupuncture ("Board"). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in strong support of House Bill No. 845, Relating to the Use of the Doctor of Acupuncture Title, which is an Administration bill.

The Board previously met on this bill and wholeheartedly supports the measure which seeks to ensure that Hawaii acupuncture licensees who use the "Doctor of Acupuncture" title or designation, "D.Ac." graduate from an accredited doctoral program in acupuncture and oriental medicine or, in the case of a foreign program, one that is equivalent. The measure would also repeal the Board's authority to approve advanced programs of study. Finally, the bill requires graduates of foreign programs to submit their educational credentials to a board approved and designated professional, at the licensee's expense.

Section 436E-13, HRS, provides that licensees can complete *either* an accredited program *or* a Board approved program as the basis to use "Doctor of Acupuncture" or "D.Ac.". Until recently, there was no available accredited

doctoral program; thus, the only way that a licensee could meet the requirement would be to apply to the Board for approval of the program the licensee studied. However, in 2002, an accredited doctoral program was developed and is now being offered at over nine U.S. schools. Since 2005, the schools have graduated approximately 145 students. As of 2009, approximately 855 students have enrolled in the accredited program.

The Board has been steadfast in its belief that the accredited doctoral program is the gold standard that licensees, who wish to set themselves apart by calling themselves “Doctor of Acupuncture” or “D.Ac.”, should be required to complete. Accordingly, the Board strongly favors repealing its authority to approve advanced programs of study because it lacks the experience, expertise and resources to do so.

In addition, the Board believes that licensees who attained their doctoral studies from a foreign school should have their school transcripts and curriculum evaluated by credential evaluators, at the licensees own expense. In its experience in reviewing foreign school documents, the Board has found the documents to be confusing, illegible and conflicting. More importantly, the Board is concerned that it lacks the resources and expertise to accurately judge the validity of the documents and school. The Board would utilize the credential evaluation reports as a tool during the application review. Incidentally, in a 2008 legislative initiative, the Board sought similar amendment for foreign school graduates seeking acupuncture licensure, which the Legislature supported.

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For these reasons, the Board strongly supports the bill and asks that the measure be passed out of Committee as is.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill No. 845.



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& acupuncture association*

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January 30, 2013

TO: Della Au Belatti, Chair
Health Committee

**RE: Testimony Supporting House Bill 845
Relating to the use of the Doctor of Acupuncture title**

The HOMAA Board **supports** HB845's intention to grant Doctor of Acupuncture title based on national educational guidelines and eliminate the current route established by the Hawaii Board of Acupuncture.

The Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (ACAOM) is the national accrediting body for United States acupuncture and oriental medicine schools and is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education. This body has outlined programs for Master and Doctoral levels. Master level graduates would receive the Licenses Acupuncturist title and Doctoral level graduates would receive the Doctor of Acupuncture title.

The American Association of College Registrars and Admissions Officers International Education Services (AACRAO IES) is a center that provides international education evaluations. Currently, the Hawaii Board of Acupuncture accepts educational evaluations from this association to approve foreign graduates applying for Hawaii Licensed Acupuncturist title. Foreign graduates should have equal opportunity to be approved for the Doctor of Acupuncture title if his or her training proves equivalent to or exceeds that of the U.S. ACAOM doctoral program requirements. China is after all the birthplace of this ancient system of medicine.

In the US acupuncture education system, Master's level acupuncture training programs require 3,000 or more hours of combined didactic and clinical instruction. The Doctoral level programs require an additional 1,200 hours of training. Graduates from China's Traditional Chinese Medicine universities exceed 5,400 hours of training over 5-year programs.

We ask you to **support** HB854.

Sincerely,

Christina Kapoathanasis, L.Ac., Dipl. O.M.
Executive Director on behalf of the Hawaii Oriental Medicine and Acupuncture Association