People For Acupuncture

Fact Sheet

The CDC reports that "Deaths from prescription painkillers have reached epidemic levels in the past decade" and recommends Health Insurers "Increase coverage for other treatments to reduce pain" www.cdc.gov/VitalSigns/PainkillerOverdoses/index.html

The Bill

Acupuncture is cost-effective, clinically effective and widely used in a variety of health care settings

- **This bill** makes acupuncture services more accessible to all families in every income bracket in Vermont.
- **This bill** requires that all individual or group accident or health insurance policies, issued by an insurer or non-profit health service corporation, provide benefits for services rendered by a licensed acupuncturist in the state of Vermont for diagnoses of pain management, substance abuse treatment and nausea.
- **The consumer** should have a full range of choices among all professionals licensed to practice acupuncture.

The Facts

It is time for healthcare insurance equality reform and the inclusion of acupuncture into Vermonter's healthcare choices.

Acupuncture is Cost Effective

- Acupuncture was found to have the highest level of effectiveness in the treatment of low back pain in two large studies (Cochrane and the British Government), and as a result, the British and German health care systems now pay for acupuncture.
- According to a study in Washington State, costs actually decreased for acupuncture and complementary medicine users in high disease burden groups due to a reduction of more expensive conventional care.
- In these studies, inclusion of acupuncture did not significantly escalate health care costs, perhaps decreasing costs if preventive care, whose results are hard to factor in, were included.

Illness	Savings per Patient with acupuncture treatment
Post Stroke Rehabilitation Johansson, K. et al (1994) Neurology 43:2189-2192	$26,000
Migraine "Reduction in Work Days Missed Due to Migraine" – Liguori, A. et al (2000)	$35,480
Angina Pectoris Reduction of hospitalization by 90% and a 70% reduction in surgery. –Altern, J. Complement Med 5:405-413	$32,000
Severe Osteoarthritis Compared to arthoplasty surgery, "Acupuncture in the Treatment of Severe Osteoarthritis: a long term study"	$9,000
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome (CTS) Laser acupuncture treatments vs. medically treated without surgery	$4246

Acupuncture is Effective

- Acupuncture is a clinically effective treatment supported by numerous studies.
- NIH reports that the data in support of acupuncture are as strong as those for many accepted Western medical therapies.
- In 1997 the NIH approved acupuncture as an adjunctive treatment for several conditions including pain, nausea, asthma, carpal tunnel syndrome and paralysis from stroke.
- Over 500 positive clinical trials measuring the efficacy of acupuncture have been conducted in the past three decades.
- There are 50 systematic reviews of acupuncture in the Cochrane databases. Overall, the trend has been favorable, advocating the use of acupuncture in a clinical setting as an adjunct treatment with conventional therapies, where suitable (Witt et al. 2006).
- Positive studies include acupuncture treatment for low back pain, neck pain, osteoarthritis of the knee and hip, fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, TMJ, headaches, infertility, pain and nausea in cancer patients.

Acupuncturists are Trained and Certified

- Acupuncturists licensed in Vermont are regulated by the Office of Professional Regulations. Acupuncturists train for a minimum of 1725 hours including a minimum of 800 hours of supervised clinical practice, including biomedical science training. This is the equivalent to of 3 to 4 years of study achieve an entry level degree.

Acupuncture Treatments are Safe

- One of the advantages of acupuncture is that the incidence of adverse effects is substantially lower than that of many drugs or other accepted medical procedures used for the same conditions.
- Acupuncture has been practiced and refined for more than 2500 years. It uses ultra-thin needles to stimulate the nervous system to release brain chemicals for relaxation and well being.
- Studies in Europe and Japan showed that less than 0.2% of all individuals treated with acupuncture experienced adverse effects.

Contact

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