

H.690, submitted testimony. 3/11/16

March 10th, 2016

Dear Representative William Lippert,

I am a physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) physician practicing in Rutland, Vermont. I studied acupuncture during my internship in a program involving over 300 hours of study and practice based on the Helms technique which was accredited by the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture. Following my internship I completed my residency in PM&R at New York University Medical Center. During my residency I continued to study acupuncture with my program director.

I moved to Vermont to join the PM&R practice at Rutland Regional Medical Center. A large part of my current practice involves pain management. Our clinic is committed to non-narcotic treatment methods, and an important part of my treatment alternatives in some instances would be acupuncture. Unfortunately, because physicians require a special license to practice acupuncture in Vermont, I am not able to offer this treatment to my patients. I currently have a list of numerous patients waiting for me to be able to practice this modality.

When I realized that a separate license was required in Vermont, I initially attempted to obtain a medical acupuncture license, but discovered that one does not currently exist. After contacting the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, I discovered I may need to undergo standalone acupuncture training, consisting of approximately 1600 hours of study, which does not consider or recognize my significant training as a physician, in order to apply for their license. This is prohibitive, and not consistent with many other states where physicians with training in acupuncture are able to practice without such license.

I strongly support bill H.690. This exemption will enable physicians to provide acupuncture as part of their practice – a valuable alternative to many other treatments including narcotic medication with potentially more deleterious side effects.

Thank you for your consideration of this important bill. Please inform me if I can provide further assistance.

Best regards,

Arabella Bull-Stewart, D.O.