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To Senator Crisco, Representative Megna, Senator Kelly, Representative Sampson, and Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee:

Testimony on Acupuncture Bill SB98 Patricia Heraghty, LAc., Dipl. Ac., O.T.

The NIH recognizes Acupuncture /Oriental medicine (AOM) to be a complete, holistic medical system of theory and practice that is fully credentialed and established within the US medical healthcare system. Its basis lies in a refined diagnostic system to address prevention as well as the treatment of disease and injuries.

It is well documented that disease prevention is the most cost effective way to address a multitude of health issues. AOM has been scrutinized possibly more than any other CAM therapy to date and continues to demonstrate a safety track record that allows for the lowest medical malpractice rates in the nation.

Acupuncture is a minimally invasive intervention for many health conditions, producing no serious side effects, with the ability to alleviate symptoms while decreasing dependence or need for prescription drugs. In addition, acupuncture will not produce any negative interactions with concurrent prescription drugs.

The most notable recent review for cost effectiveness was conducted for New Mexico which estimated savings of \$42 billion over a five year period utilizing acupuncture, randomized with five different conditions and a sample size of 500 subjects.

Additional research has demonstrated the effectiveness of acupuncture with chronic pain in sustaining relief in 8 to 12 treatments for many pain syndromes (Berman et al. 2004, Witt et al. 2006).

A study of 29 patients with severe OA of the knee, each awaiting arthroplasty surgery, were randomly selected to receive a course of acupuncture treatment or to be placed on a wait list beginning 9



weeks later, and of the 29 patients, 7 were able to cancel their scheduled surgeries. Thereby resulting in a cost savings of \$9,000 per patient in hospital related fees (Christenson BV et al 1992).

Acupuncture saved just under a million dollars from decreased days of rehabilitative care status post stroke episode in another study of 78 stroke patients, wherein half were randomly selected to receive adjunctive acupuncture treatment. Patients who participated in the protocol which included acupuncture, recovered more quickly with an average stay of 88 days compared to control group of 161 days. This resulted in cost savings of \$26,000 per patient or a grand total of \$936,000 in avoided hospital fees (Johansson K et al 1993).

The utilization of acupuncture has clearly demonstrated improvement in health and wellness while reducing overall healthcare costs. AOM practitioners presently represent our most untapped healthcare resource.

Respectfully,

Patricia Heraghty

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