**1187**

47 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

July 30, 2005 Saturday

**Province plans to regulate Chinese medicine**

**BYLINE:** Rob Ferguson, Toronto Star

**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. A01

**LENGTH:** 694 words

The days when anyone can offer **acupuncture** or **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** treatments are coming to an end, says Health Minister George Smitherman.

Legislation will be introduced in December to regulate the centuries-old healing arts, requiring practitioners to take prescribed courses of study or pass exams to become accredited as **Chinese** **medicine** grows in popularity with all cultures.

Smitherman called **acupuncture** and **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** "an extremely useful form of alternative care that we would be foolish to ignore but irresponsible not to regulate."

There are no plans to cover **acupuncture** or **Chinese** **medicine** under the cash-strapped Ontario Health Insurance Plan, he added.

Liberal MPP Tony Wong (Markham), who prepared a report released yesterday on the need for regulation, said there are too many health concerns to risk further delay.

They include the potential for harmful reactions between western drugs and herbal treatments, plus concerns that some herbs may be toxic or of poor quality.

"I've heard that on a number of occasions people have left needles inside bodies of patients. ... I've also heard patients have gotten worse after treatment," Wong said.

About 2,000 practitioners in Ontario offer traditional Chinese medicine, which takes a holistic approach to the body and treats ailments using acupuncture, herb mixtures, diet and exercise.

The hundreds of medical doctors, chiropractors, physiotherapists and other health professionals who offer acupuncture under the supervision of their regulatory bodies will also have to become officially certified.

The law, expected to be passed next year, would make Ontario the second province to regulate traditional Chinese medicine, behind British Columbia. Quebec and Alberta regulate acupuncture only.

The concern in Ontario is that most consumers now have no way of judging or verifying the credentials of people treating them.

"Here you can train for three days and become an acupuncturist," said Helen Chen of Toronto, who took five years of training in her native China to become a doctor of traditional Chinese medicine. "That's unfair ... that's not so good for the whole industry."

That's why standardized training is needed for the several Ontario schools offering courses in traditional Chinese medicine, said Smitherman.

Those standards will be set by the self-regulatory body for Chinese medicine to be established as a result of the legislation. Wong's report notes training programs now vary in length from five years to well under a year.

"The biggest pitfall I see is the community coming together to set standards," said Heather Boon, a pharmacist and expert in alternative medicine who teaches at the University of Toronto.

"This is not going to happen overnight."

Plans for the law, a Liberal promise from the 2003 election campaign, were applauded by the Chinese medicine community as a way to boost the legitimacy of their treatments.

"Our practice has always been given to criticism mainly because of the lack of regulation," said Cedric Cheung, president of the Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Association of Canada.

Like medical doctors under the watch of the Ontario College of Physicians and Surgeons, practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine should be accountable to a self-regulating body and subject to discipline for violations of standards, he added.

Health ministry officials will now draft the law, drawing from the Wong report, which also recommended:

Different classes of practitioners be created depending on levels of education, experience and skill.

Allowing existing practitioners to become accredited through assessment and testing through so-called "grandparenting" provisions.

Some practitioners of Chinese medicine who are not fluent in English are urging the Ontario government to allow for examinations in their native language.

"If this exam has to be in English, I think the only thing I can do is to give up," Wing Yet Chan, who came to Toronto from China 27 years ago and practises at the Wayman Herbs Centre on Spadina Ave., told the Toronto Star's Huang Naili.

Smitherman said the regulation will have to be handled with "cultural sensitivities" in mind.

**LOAD-DATE:** July 30, 2005

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:**  Bernard Weil Toronto Star Helen Chen, who took five years of training in her native China, treats Carol Brown with acupuncture at her Toronto office. Chen agrees with the move to standardize training.

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** COLUMN

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** NEWSPAPER

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**1188**

72 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

August 20, 2013 Tuesday

**The preventative benefits of traditional Chinese medicine**

**BYLINE:** Isabel Teotonio Toronto Star

**SECTION:** LIFE; Pg. E6

**LENGTH:** 460 words

**Traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** is usually associated with **acupuncture**, herbs and massage, but it encompasses much more, says Adam Chen, an **acupuncture** specialist and organizer of the **Chinese** **Medicine** Experience at the Telus Taiwanfest this weekend at Harbourfront Centre.

Chen, who runs acupuncture clinics at Mount Sinai Hospital and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, has invited 22 other practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine to provide free consultations and seminars about preventative and curative medicines.

Afternoon seminars will address issues such as stroke prevention, allergy treatment and ways to manage menopause. Individual consultations start at noon and run until 8 p.m. on Aug. 24 and 6 p.m. Aug. 25.

What is traditional Chinese medicine?

The main idea is to prevent disease and improve wellness. It's not only about acupuncture or acupressure. It involves proper diet, certain self-massage, exercise and herbal remedies. Perfect health is relative. For example, a morning person will feel fatigued at night, and a night owl will feel sluggish in the morning. Because their body type is different, you can't use the same methods on both of them.

How does traditional Chinese medicine work?

Part of the concept is following nature - just as the sun rises and sets, you have to act accordingly so that you're healthy. During different seasons our body's physiological functions vary and we need to understand how to fit with the natural changes of the seasons. ... If we try to follow nature, our health will improve. The rhythm of one's life makes a huge impact on health. For instance, if you manage your stress, improve your sleep quality and have a proper diet, menopausal symptoms will naturally reduce.

People think if they go to their annual checkup with the family doctor that's enough. ... However, everybody's body is like a vehicle and you need to do regular checkups and regular workouts. Not too many people understand that the body needs regular care.

What illnesses can traditional Chinese medicine help prevent?

It can prevent allergies by improving the immune system's function; gastric ulceration by reducing acid; heart attack by improving coronary blood flow and stroke by controlling blood flow in the brain. The World Health Organization has listed more than two dozen diseases and health conditions that are effectively treated by acupuncture. More than 90 per cent of my patients have specific diseases.

Also, traditional Chinese medicine can effectively control pain, depression, anxiety, stress, insomnia, irritable bowel syndrome, menstrual problems, infertility, Bell's palsy, stroke and much more.

Is this done through acupuncture?

Acupuncture is one method. Herbal remedies and exercise, such as Tai Chi, are also important.

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**1189**

240 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

July 3, 1997, Thursday, FINAL EDITION

**Regulation urged for alternative medicine No safeguards exist for acupuncture, committee told**

**BYLINE:** BY DONNA JEAN MACKINNON TORONTO STAR

**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. A24

**LENGTH:** 389 words

A cross-section of people interested in the fate of alternative medicine in Ontario told an ad hoc committee at the College of Physicians and Surgeons yesterday that they want methods like **acupuncture** and homeopathy regulated.

Currently in Ontario anyone can read up on **acupuncture** and hang out their shingle, said Joanne Pritchard- Sobhani, a Brockville practitioner of **acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine** who has studied in Toronto, Sri Lanka and China. "Doctors dabbling in **acupuncture,** after a weekend of reading, are a threat to public safety," she said.

Pritchard-Sobhani told committee members Dr. Robert Buckman, Dr. David Walker and Douglas Anderson that she advocates integrating mainstream western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine and believes people should have equal access to both.

"We know, due to pressure from pharmaceutical companies, doctors over-prescribe medicines like antibiotics that are not effective. We now realize the limitation of western medicine," she said.

Pritchard-Sobhani was one of 15 speakers who appeared before the committee advocating everything from holistic medicine to penile vacuum therapy - methods not regulated in Ontario.

"I want to convince the college that vacuum therapy for impotence should be available through doctors' prescription," said Dr. Donald Mode, a representative for Osbon Medical Systems. "Prescription sets standards and serves public safety. Right now this device is available only through sex shops and pornographical magazines."

Dr. Jai Li of the Canadian Academy of Chinese Traditional Health Science, said his 400 members want to be "recognized as an independent and comprehensive health-care profession" with the same privileges as "western" doctors.

Committee member Buckman asked Li, if the college accepted traditional Chinese medicine, how could it decide where to draw the line with other alternative practices when there are literally thousands in the world? He received no answer.

Dr. Jerry Green, a lobbyist who worked with Liberal MPP Monte Kwinter on Bill 126, legislation that ensures physicians who provide "non-traditional" therapies are not guilty of misconduct, yesterday described the college as "hostile" toward alternative methods.

The bill passed second reading in the Legislature on May 8.

**LOAD-DATE:** July 4, 1997

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301 of 995 DOCUMENTS

thestar.com

March 19, 2016 Saturday

**TCM program a breakthrough for alternative medicine**

**BYLINE:** Vawn HimmelsbachSpecial to the Star

**SECTION:** LIFE | LIFESTYLE AND LIVING | TO

**LENGTH:** 675 words

**Traditional** **Chinese** **Medicine** has moved beyond the borders of Chinatown - not just into **acupuncture** clinics, but also into conventional medical clinics and acute care hospitals.

Increasing interest and growing acceptance of non-Western medicine are reasons behind Humber College's move into TCM. Earlier this month, the college launched its **Traditional** **Chinese** **Medicine** Practitioner (TCMP) advanced diploma program - the first and only publicly funded program of its kind in Canada.

The goal is to train the next generation of TCM practitioners in Ontario, as well as contribute to the evidence-based practice of TCM.

Jessica Leung, 20, just found out she's been accepted into the program, which starts in September.

She was inspired to apply for the program by a TCM practitioner she knows well: her dad. "Ever since I was little I got to witness the potential of TCM because of my dad," she said. "I got to see how it can really help people with critical illnesses."

Leung is wrapping up a business administration degree at the University of Toronto, which she hopes will provide transferable skills in leadership and management if she decides to open her own TCM clinic one day.

"What I really liked about Humber was the amount practical clinical experience," she said, adding that she's excited to learn about Chinese herbology in particular. There are six mandatory clinical placements, one clinical observation and one clinical practicum to provide students with practical experience.

"It's a big step for the TCM community so I'm really glad to be part of it," said Leung. "I think the future is a lot brighter now - it's becoming more widely accepted in the Western community."

Thanks to factors such as immigration and access to information online, Ontarians are becoming more aware of other modalities to support their health and wellness. "We would be remiss if we didn't support that," said Jason Powell, dean of the School of Health Sciences at Humber. "There's a gap in our wish and desire to be well and what's available - we want to close that gap."

The TCM profession was regulated in 2014, which could open up more employment opportunities for future graduates. According to Service Canada, certified training programs and the trend toward alternative medicine means "the number of practitioners of natural healing (which include Chinese medical practitioners) should rise sharply in the next few years."

There is already a "substantial appetite" for the TCMP program at Humber by way of applications, according to Powell.

Danny Li, program advisor for TCM with Humber's School of Health Sciences, is also a TCM practitioner. Since the industry has been regulated, he's seen a huge increase in public interest - and in credibility and trust.

But he points out that many of the TCM practitioners in Ontario are well over the age of 50 - and Ontario needs to start grooming the next generation.

"Now we have a proper training program," said Li, adding that this new generation of practitioners will have higher competencies across all modalities that fall within the realm of TCM. The curriculum is being developed by an advisory committee of 14 experts from different fields to ensure diversity.

"This is not a program where we're isolated to acupuncture," said Powell. "We are providing education for TCM practitioners who will have an ability to implement comprehensive herbal therapy, moxibustion and all of the treatment methodologies and wellness supports."

Graduates of the program will be qualified to practice acupuncture, as well as prescribe herbal therapy. They'll also be eligible for the national examination and, upon successful completion of the exam, be licensed with the College of TCM Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario (CTCMPAO).

Humber is also planning to lead research initiatives to evaluate the efficacy of TCM as a treatment option. "There's not an abundance of evidence that says penicillin with herbal therapy and acupuncture does this," said Powell. "We want to be the ones that show the world that TCM is amazing."

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**1191**

374 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

February 19, 1995, Sunday, SUNDAY SECOND EDITION

**Cast aside medical politics**

**SECTION:** LETTER; Pg. C2

**LENGTH:** 272 words

Re the Feb. 12 letter by Dr. David Evans, **Acupuncture** no better than placebo, in response to The Sunday Star's Jan. 29 FYI section articles on **acupuncture. Acupuncture** is one component of **Traditional Chinese Medicine** (TCM), which has a history of about 5,000 years.

The World Health Organization (WHO) conducted many scientific studies before stating, at WHO's inter-regional seminar in 1979, that acupuncture can be very effective in treating 43 different diseases.

I have conducted scientific studies based on many years of clinical practice in London, Ont. It was found that the use of acupuncture, in combination with herbs and Chinese nutrition, could treat effectively 55 medical disorders.

This scientific paper was presented at the world conference in Kyoto, Japan, in 1993, sponsored by WHO, the Ministry of Health of Japan, the Medical Society of Japan, and the World Federation of Acupuncture-Moxibustion Societies (WFAS).

Dr. Jean Schatz, the former president of the International Society of Acupuncture (SIA) of Paris, France, and a luminary in the field of modern health care, underscored that "since Traditional (Chinese Medicine) and Western medicine have the same objectives to cure and relieve the human body, they should not compete, but rather complement each other."

The best interests of mankind can be served and health- care costs can be reduced by the two medicines complementing one another. So, let us cast aside the medical politics and work together to serve all of mankind.

Cedric K. T. Cheung

The Chinese Medicine and

Acupuncture Association

of Canada

London, Ont.

**LOAD-DATE:** May 12, 1999

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

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**1192**

523 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

April 9, 2013 Tuesday

**Acupuncture made life livable;**

**Put public safety first, Editorial April 3**

**SECTION:** LETTER; Pg. A14

**LENGTH:** 70 words

Put public safety first, Editorial April 3

In 2005, after 40 years of suffering with ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease, I lucked out and discovered **traditional chinese medicine. Acupuncture** and dietary change have made my life livable. There are many medical systems alive on this amazing planet. Our North American version, known for stellar acute care, falls short in the area of chronic illness.

Pat Irwin Lycett, Orono

**LOAD-DATE:** August 16, 2014

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** COLUMN

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** NEWSPAPER

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635 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

December 12, 2005 Monday

**Ban animal-based Chinese medicines**

**SECTION:** LETTER; Pg. A25

**LENGTH:** 186 words

New bill governs Chinese healing

Dec. 8.

There are some very disturbing aspects to the proposed regulation of **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** by the Ontario health ministry. With regard to herbal remedies and **acupuncture,** legislation to regulate these is welcome so they can be tested for safety and to ensure sterile conditions.

There is, however, another side to traditional Chinese medicine, which involves the use of animal-based ingredients. I submit that this aspect is derived mainly from superstition, eg. strength from tiger parts; male potency from seal penises and so on. It often involves abhorent cruelty to animals bred for the purpose. For instance, deplorable conditions of captivity, and execrable practices such as "milking" a live bear's gall bladder. Tigers have been bred specifically to be slaughtered for "medicine" and many of our own wild Canadian bears have been illegally killed merely to extract their gall bladders, with the rest of the body left to rot.

These kinds of products should have no place in Ontario or Canada, and should be banned from being imported or sold.

Yvonne Mackie, Newmarket

**LOAD-DATE:** December 12, 2005

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** COLUMN

**PUBLICATION-TYPE:** NEWSPAPER

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654 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

February 1, 1996, Thursday, ZONE

**Seminar explores Chinese medicine**

**BYLINE:** By Tracy Hanes Toronto Star

**SECTION:** SCARBOROUGH; Pg. SC2

**LENGTH:** 518 words

In the 24 years since he came to Canada, family doctor Clement Wong has seen a growing interest in **traditional Chinese medicine.**

While western medicine is his primary focus, Wong, who practises at Credit Valley Hospital in Mississauga, is also trained in **acupuncture.** For the past few years, he has been spending six hours a week studying the medical traditions of his ancestors.

Wong will be among the speakers at a one-day seminar on traditional Chinese medicine Feb. 24 at Centennial College which is aimed at health care professionals and educators or members of the public who have an interest in the topic.

The day will include basic theory of acupuncture, hands- on demonstrations, an introduction to Chinese herbal medicine and a look at typical herbs, and a session to try out the techniques. In addition to Wong, presenters include Chinese medical doctor Danny Li of Toronto and Dr. Zhida Tao, former president of the Guangzhou University of Traditional Chinese Medicine, who now practises in Scarborough.

Wong says there are several reasons for the increasing popularity of Chinese medicine.

"For one, it works and it has a very strong historical base, with wisdoms collected over thousands of years," he says. "We also have a larger Chinese population immigrating to Canada and we're getting professionals and doctors coming who are able to provide training."

Not just the Chinese population is embracing the old traditions, however.

"People are becoming more knowledgeable and are appreciating traditional medicine more," he notes.

"In the past there was little respect for traditional medicine and people had more faith in western medicine's scientific approach. Some have been through the scientific treatments and don't feel better, so they look to this as an option. And doctors who are western-trained are becoming more open-minded."

Wong, who received his medical degree from the University of Toronto, originally trained in anatomical acupuncture and finds there are merits to both ancient and modern medicine.

"For instance, for a strep throat, I'd use penicillin and not Chinese herbal medicine," he says. "But it is effective for certain types of high blood pressure, some forms of diabetes and chronic skin rashes and for cancer patients in the palliative care stage.

"I offer traditional Chinese medicine as an option to my patients. There are some who are chronically ill, who don't want to take medication. If they are interested, I'll give them what's safe and effective."

Wong cautions patients not to rush into traditional Chinese medicine, however. The Ontario government does not regulate this form of medicine, so it is important to check out a practitioner's training and credentials first, he says.

"With seminars like this one, our priority is to arouse interest and encourage them to learn about it, to encourage the government to control it and to educate the public so they will be protected," says Wong.

The fee for the day-long training session at Centennial's Progress Campus is $106. Call 698-4097 for information.

**LOAD-DATE:** March 4, 1999

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:** Star photo (Mahler) NEEDLE TRADE: Dr. Wendy Chang of Toronto will demonstrate traditional acupuncture at a seminar on Chinese medicine at Centennial College.

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**1195**

692 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

July 23, 2004 Friday

**Gwyneth's cupping runneth overCupping can suck**

**SECTION:** LIFE; Pg. D03

**LENGTH:** 204 words

All over the gossip columns recently: Gwyneth Paltrow's appearing in a low-cut top that revealed the red, round marks left on her back by **cupping**, an alternative method of stimulating **acupuncture** points through suction.

"It does have an effect like a hickey because you're actually pulling blood and qi (life force energy that flows through the meridians) to the surface," explains Noel Wright, manager of the **acupuncture** program and clinics at the Michener Institute.

"The increased blood flow helps the healing process and it does get red but that doesn't last long, maybe 24 hours."

Wright suggests Paltrow may have had cupping on her upper back to treat sore or tight muscles, or for a cold or asthma.

Cupping can be done with plastic cups to create suction - "like a bicycle pump" - or with a glass cup placed over alcohol that's been lit to create the suction.

"You can also do 'moving cupping,'" explains Wright, "by creating that fire cup and sliding the cup. It's almost similar to receiving a massage in a way.

A cupping session done by a student practitioner at the Michener Institute costs $25 ($20 for seniors and students) and a coupon for a 10 per cent summer discount is available at the Web site.

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**1196**

720 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

November 28, 2006 Tuesday

**Acupuncture bill supported**

**SECTION:** LETTER; Pg. A19

**LENGTH:** 476 words

Legislation infuriates acupuncturists

Nov. 23.

As a **traditional Chinese medicine** practitioner (TCM) in Ontario, I certainly am not "infuriated" by the successful passing of the third and final reading of Bill 50 in the Ontario Legislature on Nov. 23, 2006. This is, in fact, a historic day which will finally allow the acupuncturists and TCM practitioners of Ontario to take their place alongside the other regulated health professions in the province.

Contrary to the quotes from a vocal minority that were interviewed for this article, this bill has enjoyed widespread support both in the TCM community and the general public. It passed the support of the governing Liberal party combined with the support of the major opposition parties.

This amount of support shows that it was past time for this type of legislation. Previously, there was absolutely no regulation of acupuncture and TCM in Ontario. Anybody, regardless of training or expertise, has been able to set up shop in Ontario and start performing acupuncture. There have been absolutely no standards and no monitoring to ensure that people were receiving quality treatment. No formal mechanism currently exists to hear complaints.

The benefits to the public are obvious and include the assurance that providers of TCM and acupuncture meet educational and clinical standards before starting their practices and throughout their professional careers. The public will also know that we will finally be monitored by a self-regulatory body with regard to ethics, professional standards, and investigating complaints.

The benefits of this legislation to the profession are also many. We will benefit from increased public confidence and a higher public profile. We will be able to establish education programs that will meet our needs. There may even be increased private insurance coverage for our treatments.

Some of the issues raised in the article are flat-out errors. Bill 50 does not suddenly allow other health professionals to perform acupuncture; it limits everybody who is not a member of certain regulated health professions from performing acupuncture. And, in direct contradiction to what was reported, Bill 50 also amends the provincial Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act to ensure that natural products such as Chinese herbs are available for our profession to dispense.

After this, the government will largely step back and allow the transitional College of TCM and Acupuncturists of Ontario to establish our own standards to look after the interests of the public and the profession.

Instead of belated protests and rhetoric, I believe it is time for us as a profession to step forward and make the effort to work together for the betterment of the entire TCM and acupuncture community of Ontario.

Jane Cheung, committee member, Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Association of Canada, Oshawa

**LOAD-DATE:** November 28, 2006

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

**GRAPHIC:**  cp file photo Benefits to the profession are many, from increased public confidence and a higher public profile to establishing education programs to meet practitioners needs.

**DOCUMENT-TYPE:** COLUMN

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746 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

November 15, 2006 Wednesday

**Acupuncture will become regulated**

**SECTION:** LETTER; Pg. A23

**LENGTH:** 408 words

New bill ails Chinese medical practitioners

Nov. 13.

As a **traditional Chinese medicine** (TCM) practitioner in Ontario, I strongly disagree with the omissions and imbalanced presentation of the issues surrounding Bill 50. There is some vocal opposition to Bill 50 but there is strong support from much of the TCM community from a variety of sources including health consumer groups and many of the actual practitioner members of some of the groups whose leaders are so vocal in their opposition to this bill.

I also have to point out that the credentials and history of Cedric Cheung, president of theChinese Medicine and Acupuncture Association of Canada, vice-president of theWorld Federation of Acupuncture-Moxibustion (the only acupuncture association recognized by the World Health Organization) and more than 20 years of lobbying various provincial and federal governments for the regulation of TCM and acupuncture across Canada, were notable in their absence compared to the listed credentials of the other people interviewed.

The TCM community in Ontario will benefit from the passage of this bill as it will allow TCM and acupuncture to become one of the regulated health professions in Ontario. This means that TCM practitioners will be the ones establishing their college and working together to determine the practical details of "grandfathering" existing practitioners, establishing the new standards for the title of "doctor" and whether "diagnosis" is one of the controlled acts for which we should apply to the Health Professions Regulatory Advisory Council.

There is nothing in the bill that would force a TCM practitioner to change how he or she works at this time; they would still be able to assess, recommend herbs and use acupuncture on their patients. The public only stands to benefit through enhanced safety and the assurance that qualified professionals will be managing their care. Once regulation has passed, they may benefit from improved insurance access to our services.

The Regulated Health Professions Act does not allow for one college to regulate the activities of the others - the college of TCM and acupuncture would not be able to mandate standards for the other professions. The existing regulated health professions already have their own colleges to ensure their members are providing quality care within their scopes of practice.

Jane Cheung, member, Chinese Medicine and Acupuncture Association of Canada, Oshawa Clinic

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**1198**

768 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

January 29, 1995, Sunday, SUNDAY SECOND EDITION

**Acupuncture visit 'painless'**

**SECTION:** FYI; Pg. F4

**LENGTH:** 505 words

A visit to an acupuncturist consists of two main phases, diagnosis and treatment.

A practitioner of **Traditional Chinese Medicine** (TCM) will observe the patient's tongue, take the pulse in six or eight spots on the wrists, discretely sniff the patient's odor. A doctor trained in Western medical schools may check charts for blood work or urinalysis, ask questions relating to a patient's lifestyle and stress levels. Both will ask the patient to describe the symptoms or pain.

The treatment phase begins with the acupuncturist directing the patient to uncover certain parts of the body - usually the forearms, feet, shins and torso - and to sit in a chair or recline on a bed.

The practitioner will then use his or her fingertips to gently identify the points for placement of the needles. The needles are almost as fine as a hair and have rounded ends rather than the oblique and cutting points found on injection needles - so insertion is virtually painless.

Because of the risk of AIDS, most acupuncturists today use sealed packets of disposable needles - insist on it.

Other than the coolness of a sterilizing wipe with alcohol, the patient may be unaware of the insertion of the needles. The gentleness of the needling is where the individual acupuncturist's skill is most evident to the new patient.

Traditional Japanese acupuncture uses a guide tube or straw which presses on the skin of the appropriate meridian point and within which the needle itself moves. The patient feels only the slight pressure of the guide tube.

The TCM practitioner may snap a finger on the point, numbing it, before dextrously slipping the needle in. Likewise, a Western-trained acupuncturist may use local pressure before inserting the needle - the patient is often unaware of its application. At its worst - for needlephobiacs - the insertion of an acupuncture needle into the skin is no more painful than a mosquito bite, far less painful than a pin prick.

Anywhere from half a dozen to a score of needles may be used, depending on the condition being treated. The length of time the needles remain in depends on the style of acupuncture being practised.

TCM practitioners and Western MDs usually insert a series of needles, then clip tiny wires to the needles and hook them up to an electric stimulator. This low-intensity current electrically stimulates the acupuncture points. The patient feels a sensation around the needle that varies from a mild electric tingling to a dull ache.

The needles are left in place for 20 to 30 minutes. The acupuncturist monitors the patient carefully, adjusting the current levels for comfort if electro- stimulation is used, and draping warm towels over any part of the body which feels cold.

When the treatment is finished, the wires are unclipped and the needles are removed - an entirely painless procedure.

Patients leave with a warm, drowsy sensation of well-being. This pleasurable feeling increases for several hours afterward.

See related article p.F1

**LOAD-DATE:** May 12, 1999

**LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH

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**1199**

775 of 995 DOCUMENTS

The Toronto Star

December 8, 2005 Thursday

**New bill governs Chinese healing**

**BYLINE:** Rob Ferguson, Toronto Star

**SECTION:** NEWS; Pg. A04

**LENGTH:** 398 words

It will take four years before Ontarians can be sure that anyone treating them with **acupuncture** or other forms of **traditional** **Chinese** **medicine** is properly qualified, Health Minister George Smitherman, says.

That's the time frame - under legislation proposed yesterday - for setting up a new body regulating the ancient healing arts, setting standards for training and accreditation of more than 2,000 practitioners.

"If the sign on the door says 'doctor,' patients need to know that title is backed up," Smitherman said before introducing the Traditional Chinese Medicine Act.

Penalties for misrepresentation of qualifications will range from $5,000 to $10,000.

The way things now stand in Ontario, anyone can go into business offering acupuncture or traditional Chinese medicine, including herbal therapies.

"There's a lot of loose, unofficial titles out there," said Toronto chiropractor Dr. Kwong Chiu, who also practises acupuncture.

He's one of many in the Chinese medicine community who applauded the government's move, which Smitherman and practitioners agreed will boost the credibility of fast-growing traditional Chinese medicine.

But until the profession becomes self-regulating - like doctors, chiropractors and massage therapists, for example - it's up to consumers to check the background of practitioners if they have any concerns.

The field is coming under regulation because of the potential for harmful reactions between western drugs and herbal treatments, concerns some herbs may be toxic or of poor quality, and fears that practitioners could cut corners on the sterilization of acupuncture needles, a problem that happened in Quebec last year, prompting officials to warn 1,100 patients to get tested for HIV and hepatitis.

Smitherman said he hopes publicity surrounding his legislation will create "a higher degree of awareness" among patients and said acupuncture and Chinese medicine will not be covered by OHIP.

There is a "very large range" of skills among practitioners now, with some having graduated from years of study in traditional schools in China or Canada and others who learned from elders or in weekend courses, said Mary Wu, president of the Toronto School of Traditional Chinese Medicine. "That's why it needs to be regulated."

B.C. is the only other province to regulate acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine. Alberta and Quebec regulate acupuncture only.

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**GRAPHIC:**  newscom As things stand now in Ontario, anyone can go into business offering traditional Chinese medicine, including herbal therapies.

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**Alternative medicine often fails patients**

**SECTION:** LETTER; Pg. A22

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Re Alternative medicine is our right (Opinion page, June 26) by Lisa M. Cherry. I am a general practitioner. I have a large Asian-based practice and a lot of my patients try alternative medicine in the form of "herbal" medicine, **acupuncture and traditional "Chinese medicine.**"

I have even taken herbal medicine as a child. Although I am not a strong opponent of these forms of practices, I have seen time and time again where these treatments have failed patients. They always end up coming to me for further treatments.

I have seen patients take herbal medicine for diabetes, hypertension and even cancer, and, almost always, their illness becomes worse than when I was treating them. Some of my patients have lost their lives because they stopped their Western medicine, much to my opposition.

Since they have to pay for the treatment out of their own pockets, it does not cost the taxpayers; however, that does not justify the treatments. In some cases, I have seen patients travel as far as Mexico to receive "natural treatments" for their cancer, costing them $ 5,000 to $ 6,000 U.S. And they were not cured.

I believe it is our (the medical profession's) duty to also educate and protect our patients. I believe that unless there is strong scientific based evidence, every other treatment is anecdotal.

Cherry writes about Bill 126, but unfortunately, by the time the evidence that proves that the therapy posed a greater risk to a patient's health comes to light, it is often too late to treat that patient with Western medicine.

I think there is a place for these types of treatments but, without strong regulation, I am afraid that, more often than not, the patients are at risk. It is not a right when it can endanger your life.

Daniel Yim, M.D. Willowdale

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