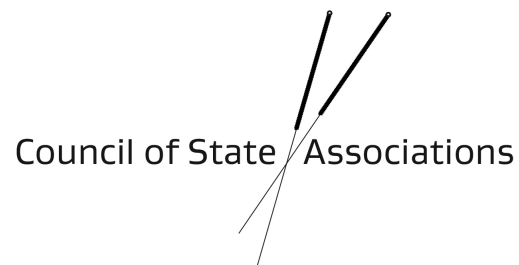




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## AOM Day Outreach Toolkit:

A Guide for Council of State Association Members  
to Build Communities Around Wellness  
and Build Their Practice Too!



[www.aomday.org](http://www.aomday.org)



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Dear AOM Practitioner,

Now that Americans have more access to complementary care under health care reform and the expansion of Essential Health Benefits, it is time to reach out to our community partners in health and wellness.

More than 3.1 million adults visited an acupuncturist in 2007, a figure that has risen sharply over the past decade. In 1997 there were 27 visits to an acupuncturist per 1,000 adults compared to 79.2 visits in 2007. To remain at the forefront of truly patient-centered integrative medical care, outreach is an important tool for building awareness about acupuncture's safety and benefits.

We are pleased to share this toolkit with you. It was developed by the Council of State Association's Public Education Committee. The following sections outline everything you may need, from formulating an AOM Day outreach event, building partnerships, frequently asked questions, templates for communications, forms for initial contact and follow-through. They are designed to make your AOM Day event a guided and effective opportunity for building awareness of AOM through creating referral networks in your community and identifying allies in health and wellness promotion.

In Health,

Public Education Committee  
Council of State Associations (CSA)



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## 1. Define the Purpose of Your Event:

### **Choose what type of event you would like to host.**

- Meet healthcare providers in your community to build referral networks
- Patient reactivation campaign
- Public awareness event to “Open Your Doors” to educate the public about the benefits of AOM

### **Is your event internal or external? Or both?**

#### **External: Who You Need To Contact**

- Identify locations where health services/screenings/fairs are delivered in your community such as a hospital, outpatient health center, community-based clinic, or a non-profit organization offering services such as recovery, nutrition and health-screening programs.
- Identify an appropriate contact at that organization or business and gather complete contact information: email, phone, address and contact’s job title. Look for individuals in office management, community or human relations if you do not know where to start.
- Determine the type of event that will best suit all parties to introduce them to you and your practice, for example:
  - Open house in your clinic
  - Stress Reducing Mini-treatments in a community location
  - Health screenings at a health fair
  - Community class at a local library
  - Film screening at a local movie theater
- Activate your patients to refer people to your event by posting on Facebook, by putting updates in your newsletters, etc.



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### **Internal: Who You Need To Contact**

- Reach out to your patient base. Use your mailing list and clinic Facebook page.
- Reach out to other professionals in your office to find an event that excites the whole team.
- Open house
- Patient Appreciation Day
- Stress Reducing Mini-treatments
- Community class

## **2. Event Checklist**

### **Prepare in advance**

- Gather elements for your promotional table including: business cards, brochures and brochure holders, tablecloths, branded materials, mailing list opt-in sheet, consent forms (if doing demos), brochures, signs and acupuncture/herb supplies.
- If doing treatments outside of your clinic location, **consult with your malpractice insurer** first. Also consult with event location staff about any waivers/proof of insurance required.
- Share event details in advance with any staff or volunteers assisting you with the event, including hours of event, roles and expectations.

### **Promoting Your Event**

- What is your message? Decide on a brief title and description for your event that matches your target audience. Use terms that describe the kind of event you plan to hold (e.g. hands-on class, complimentary stress reduction treatments, herb sampling). Use terms that are easy to understand and verbs that are action oriented.
- How to get your message out there?
  - **Press release:** As part of the NCCAOM AOM day website there is a [link to a press release template](#). Working with the media directly helps build name recognition for you and your business.
  - **NCCAOM “[Because It Works](#)” competition:** Start gathering testimonials via video to spread the word of acupuncture and get the possibility of winning an iPad.
  - **Newsletter:** Do you have a clinic newsletter or blog? Start talking about your event in advance! And prepare to gather photos, testimonials and other copy to keep telling your story after AOM day is done.



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- **Mailing:** Use your newsletter or clinic mailing list to share one of the postcards digitally or as a physical mailer to help people save the date and remember to show up for your event.
- **Advertising:** You can place a paid advertisement in a local newspaper, but simple event listings are often free as long as you send a press release to the media outlet enough in advance. Look for local newspapers in your area and often there is an event section to post your event. This often will get online and print attention.
- **Online Marketing:**
  - Facebook:** *Don't have a business Facebook page yet? Create one today [and here's how!](#)* Create an event on facebook and invite all of your followers. Tracking how many people plan to attend can help you plan better and personally engage your most loyal followers. They are a great referral base!
  - Twitter:** *Don't have a business twitter account yet? Create one today [and here's how!](#)* Tweet often about AOM, your practice and your upcoming event. Follow people you hope to connect with, twitter can be an effective tool for building relationships outside of immediate circles of friends and existing clients. Let's make #AOMday and #IHEARTacupuncture trending topics this year!
  - Website:** Share the event on your website. Post your photos, patient testimonials and tell your story in an article or blog post.

### 3. Sample Talking Points

A number of outreach tools are available to you online through the AOM day website and other media websites. NCCAOM documents include [a brochure on national standards and a consumer guide](#). Additional resources are outlined below.

As part of this outreach toolkit we have also created a FAQ for AOM Day you can adapt to promote your own practice and event:

#### **Frequently Asked Questions:**

##### **What is AOM?**

Acupuncture and Oriental medicine is a natural form of healthcare grounded in safe, effective and time-tested techniques. Its growing popularity and acceptance results in more pain relief for more patients with fewer negative side-effect. It also means healthier patients who live longer. By stimulating self-healing through a holistic approach to wellness and prevention, AOM offers truly patient-centered care.



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### **What is AOM day?**

Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day (AOM Day) is observed annually on October 24. It is part of an effort designed to increase public awareness of the progress, promise, and benefits of acupuncture and Oriental medicine.

### **Does acupuncture hurt?**

Most people feel some sensation during acupuncture, but not necessarily pain. When hair-thin needles are inserted by a trained professional, they can produce a feeling of heaviness—like a dull ache—or sensations such as warmth and tingling. Occasionally the sensations can be stronger. Most people find acupuncture very relaxing. In fact, you may even fall asleep during your treatment!

### **What does a treatment look like?**

Acupuncture is the insertion of fine solid stainless steel needles through the skin. A typical treatment includes needling 8–12 points chosen on the basis of the patient's constitution and symptoms. Each session is highly customized for you and your specific health concern. Most points selected are on the limbs and head, although back and abdomen points can also be used. Acupuncturists use many approaches to address your overall health in addition to your current symptoms.

Acupuncturists also employ specific diagnostic techniques such as tongue and pulse diagnosis to understand the dynamics creating your health concern. This approach means acupuncture is deeply patient-centered in its approach to care.

### **How does it work?**

There is no known mechanism for acupuncture although many theories have been proposed. According to Chinese medical theory, acupuncture promotes healthy circulation of blood and qi because, "Where there is free flow there is no pain, where there is pain there is no free flow." The scientific evidence base for acupuncture's effectiveness continues to grow. It is clear that for pain conditions such as a chronic low back pain, acupuncture treatment is both beneficial and safe.

### **Can acupuncture help with pain?**

Yes! Acupuncture promotes healthy circulation of blood and qi thus resolving pain. From a biochemical perspective, acupuncture analgesia is achieved by peripheral nerve stimulation that directs the brain to release endorphins, which in turn block pain pathways in the brain.

The Department of Veterans Affairs, the World Health Organization, and an increasing number health insurance providers recognize acupuncture as an effective intervention for musculoskeletal pain. As a drug-free intervention with demonstrated lasting results,



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acupuncture is an alternative for pain management without the potentially serious side effects as prescription drugs and surgery.

**Does acupuncture help other conditions?**

Yes! The World Health Organization recognizes the ability of acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine to treat over 43 common disorders including:

Gastrointestinal Disorders, Uro-genital Disorders, Gynecological Disorders, Respiratory Disorders, Disorders of the Bones, Muscles, Joints and Nervous System, Circulatory Disorders, Emotional and Psychological Disorders, including depression, anxiety, and addictions such as alcohol, nicotine and drugs.

Acupuncture is often effective therapy for other chronic and painful debilitating disorders which have no clear explanation or origin.

**Will insurance cover my treatments?**

Inquire directly with your insurance provider about your coverage. More and more private insurers as well as car insurance and workman's compensation programs reimburse for acupuncture treatments. In some states, VA hospitals and even Medicaid programs have coverage for acupuncture. Not all practitioners accept insurance, but all can provide you with the appropriate statements. Be sure to ask when you make an appointment.

**How do I find a practitioner?**

Consult your local or state professional association, the National Certification Commission on Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine ([NCCAOM](http://www.nccaom.org)), and/or licensing board for a list of practitioners. You can also ask people you trust or browse on the web for practitioners near you.

**How much does it cost?**

There are many types of practices and they have varying fee structures. Consult the National Certification Commission on Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine ([NCCAOM](http://www.nccaom.org)) website, your local state association and/or licensing board for a list of practitioners. Inquire directly with a licensed provider about their clinic's fees.





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### **What is an acupuncturist's training?**

The requirements to become a licensed acupuncturist include a minimum of 3 years post-graduate studies in Acupuncture at a school that is recognized by the Accreditation Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine ([ACAOM](#)). Licensed acupuncturists have more than 2,000 hours of education and training, including over 1,000 hours of *clinical* experience including hundreds of hours of hands-on clinical training and observation hours.

### **How does it work alongside other medical providers?**

Acupuncturists can communicate with healthcare providers to ensure the best quality care for the patients. Many physicians are now approaching acupuncture as complementary to their patients and their medical practices. Many institutes integrate such therapies. To engage your primary care physician or other health care provider you can convey your preferences and the benefits of the care you receive through acupuncture.

### **Is acupuncture safe for children?**

Kids may not like getting shots, but that doesn't mean they won't like acupuncture! Common pediatric complaints like earaches, bedwetting, ADHD and asthma all respond very well to AOM. Such treatments can include needling and non-needling techniques such as Tui Na massage. As a general rule, acupuncture is safe for ages seven or older. A practitioner who specializes in pediatrics may use acupuncture on children of all ages. Every child should be assessed for readiness for acupuncture on a case-by-case basis.

### **Is acupuncture safe during pregnancy?**

Yes! Licensed acupuncturists are trained to know which points are helpful for pregnant women and which ones are to be avoided. It's important to let your acupuncturist know if you are pregnant, or if you think you might be, so that your treatment can be as safe as possible for both mother and child. Acupuncture can help with several pregnancy-related conditions including morning sickness, back pain, premature cervical ripening, preeclampsia (pregnancy-induced hypertension), fatigue, heartburn, constipation, and gestational diabetes.

### **Are Chinese herbs safe?**

In the United States, unprocessed raw herbs are classified and regulated as foods by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). This is why Chinese medicinal herbs like garlic, ginger, and cinnamon are freely available at any local grocery store without a prescription. It is always advisable to consult with a trained herbalist so that your formula is tailored to you and your condition. This greatly increases effectiveness.



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## **Where to go for additional resources:**

### **For Marketing and Media Resources**

[Acupuncture Media Works](#) has created several tutorials:

[AOM Day marketing](#)

[Strategies to attract patients during AOM week](#)

[How to Maximize AOM Day as a Marketing Opportunity](#)

[AcuTake](#) is a website created by Sara Calabro whose articles are featured in media outlets such as the Huffington Post. Much of the content answers patients most frequently asked questions.

[Try Acupuncture](#) is a new website promoting marketing tools for acupuncturists with a free information booklet available for digital download.

### **For more on the evidence**

[The Society for Acupuncture Research](#)

[Acutrials Database](#)

## **4. Sample Treatment Giveaways**

### **Mini-treatments**

### **Health Fairs**

#### **1. Stress reducing mini-treatment**

**What is it?** Invite returning or new patients into a relaxing atmosphere. This could be your waiting area set up as a group clinic, your private practice room, or a conference room at a community business.

**Why do one?** From a patient's perspective, who doesn't need a few minutes to relax? From the acupuncturist's perspective, the marketing tool you have is you and the power of acupuncture! Give the public the chance to experience the medicine for themselves.



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### **How to do one?**

- **Attract people to your mini-treatment event**
  - *Website:* Once you have a time and location for your event put it on your website, list it on the aomday.org website, and be sure to write a follow up story after the event is over!
  - *External marketing:* You can advertise your event in event listings in local newspapers, on websites and through flyers in your immediate community.
  - *Internal marketing:* be sure everyone on your mailing list knows about the event. Ask them to bring a friend! Precall and schedule as many patients as you can before the day of the event.
- **Prepare your materials**
  - Gather all the supplies and materials you need to have on your table and for giveaways.
  - Ask your event contact about how many people you can expect to walk by, and what is the vibe of the event.
  - Plan to dress professionally and wear a nametag.
  - Share the event plan with any staff or volunteers supporting you at the event.
- **At the event**
  - Give competent and compassionate care, including sterile technique, hand sanitizing and the use of consent forms.
  - Have a sign in sheet for scheduled guests and walk-ins.
  - Have anyone receiving treatment opt-in to receive your newsletters and marketing promotions and provide email contact information.
  - Send everyone away with a gift of appreciation branded with your business name.
  - Take lots of pictures and share them on social media.
  - Gather patient testimonials from returning patients.

### **Services**

#### **Stress relief massage treatment**

Giving short 5-10 minute scalp and shoulder massages with tuina or shiatsu can make a big difference in someone's day! Pick a short and generic protocol for everyone who has stress in their life. This is a great way for prospective patients to experience your healing touch.

#### **Stress relief acupuncture treatment**

You can design your own stress relief protocol based on simple point combinations such as yintang and baihui (GV 20). Using the NADA five auricular needle protocol (heart, sympathetic, kidney, liver and shen men) is another option. The focus is on delivering skillful, compassionate and professional service that provides contact with many people in a short time. The goal is not to offer a full treatment but to make people feel safe, experience needling as comfortable, and create a desire to follow up for a regular appointment.



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**To expand the impact of your event:**

- Donate some of your earnings
- Offer free treatments to specific populations and the professionals that serve them
- Promote services/donations from other therapists

**Post-treatment conversation**

Don't forget to follow through! Ask everyone, "How was your experience today? Have you signed up on our mailing list? Do you follow us on Facebook? Would you recommend us to a friend" (give them a business card or giveaway item) Sign them up for an initial consultation or return treatment on the spot!

**Reflection**

What worked? Develop what is working (including your growing contacts list) into a long-term strategy, product offerings and services to help generate additional sales and recurring revenue from more treatments

**Follow up**

**Use the template letter** at the end of the packet to follow up with your guests at the event

**2. Health fair**

**What is it?** Many private corporations, community colleges and health insurance companies sponsor in service days for staff, life-long learning fairs and health fairs. Hosting a table to promote your practice can be as simple as passing out information, or include demonstrations such as acupuncture, pulse reading and tea tasting. The focus is on answering basic questions from the public such as: "Does it hurt? Where are you located? Can you take my insurance?" The goal is not to offer full treatment but to make people feel safe and create a desire to follow up for a regular appointment.

**Why do one?** Many times these events require no tabling fee and can give you direct access to a pool of potential patients who could talk about you around the water cooler :)



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**How to do one?**

- **Attract people to your table at the fair**
  - *Website*: Once you have a time and location for your event put it on your website, list it on the aomday.org website, and be sure to write a follow up story after the event is over!
  - *External marketing*: If you join the event early enough they will list you on flyers and internal emails, alerting staff/students that your services are available during the day of the event.
  - *Internal marketing*: Be sure everyone on your mailing list knows about the event. Ask them to bring a friend.
- **Prepare your materials**
  - Gather all the supplies and materials you need to have on your table and for giveaways.
  - Ask your event contact about how many people you can expect to walk by and what is the vibe of the event.
  - Plan to dress professionally and wear a nametag.
  - Make sure everything you have is easily portable in case the location moves or it is farther than expected from your car to the set-up location.
- **At the event**
  - Be prepared to answer questions with the FAQ. Beware of too much jargon -- most of the public are beginners, so just focus on the basics!
  - Have a sign in sheet for people to opt-in to receive your newsletters and marketing promotions.
  - Consider a raffle of a free treatment to gather people's contact information and draw people to your table.
  - Send everyone away with a gift of appreciation branded with your business name.
  - Take lots of pictures and share them on social media.



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### **Conversation**

Don't forget to follow through! "Have you signed up on our mailing list? Would you recommend us to a friend?" (give them a business card or giveaway item) Sign them up for an initial consultation or return treatment on the spot!

Talk to other vendors and pass out your business cards to them as well as the public.

### **Reflection**

What worked? Develop what is working (including your growing contacts list) into a long-term strategy, product offerings and services to help generate additional sales and recurring revenue from more treatments.

### **Follow up**

Use the template letter at the end of the packet to follow up with your guests at the event.

## **5. Sample Instructional Giveaways**

When considering things to giveaway to patients, it is best if the giveaway is something that reflects on you and your clinic.

Spend what you can afford, but have something for people to see or use on a daily basis. This will keep you in their mind. Keep with the rule of seven, people need to hear or see your message at least seven times to recognize and remember it.

### **Some ideas to consider for branded giveaways:**

- 1. Magnetic notepad** with your office name on it, and the first two things on the list are conditions you like to treat in your clinic.
- 2. Facial tissues:** *"Come in when you get the sniffles"* with your clinic name and contact information.
- 3. Magnet:** *"Stick with us to keep you well"* with your clinic name and contact information
- 4. Pen:** *"Prescribe acupuncture for health"* with your clinic name and contact information



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## 6. Sample Event Announcement

We have prepared a free AOM Day marketing kit to use to help you inform, inspire and educate your patients about AOM Day. You'll be able to personalize, download and print these tools to aid in your AOM Day marketing efforts.

Here's what's included:

AOM Day awareness poster

AOM Day Gift certificates

AOM Day referral promo cards

Click here to [Access Your Free Marketing Kit](#)

## 7. Sample Follow Up Letter

[Insert logo here]

October 24, 2014

Dear [Patient],

Thank you for participating in our recent Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Day (AOM) event [List what and where the event was located]. My hope and the hope of our Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine community as a whole is that you learned something new, got your questions answered, and found an amazing, natural, and effective treatment for yourself! Please share what you have learned about acupuncture from our event with family, friends, and colleagues. I would be honored. When your relative, friend, or colleague comes in for a consultation, I will provide them with a [free 15 minute consult, discount, etc] if they mention your name when they come in. This is my way of thanking you for spreading the word.

By stimulating healing through a holistic approach to wellness and prevention, acupuncture and Oriental medicine offers truly patient-centered care. We are delighted to start with you.

I/we look forward to seeing you again soon in [name of clinic].

In gratitude,

[Name of practitioner]

[Clinic Name]

[Address]

[City, State Zip]

[Clinic Phone Number]

[Website]

[Email]