



ACUPUNCTURE ASSOCIATION  
*of* COLORADO



**Happy Spring!**

Once again this is a full newsletter with lots going on in the AAC and for acupuncturists. Please read for important info on insurance, legislation, and our scope of practice. These are the priorities we are working on right now.

For more info, join us this upcoming Sunday for our Annual Business Meeting to give input, ask questions, and discover what the AAC is doing for you. Hope to “see you there.”

Lastly, don't miss the the open public comment period for acupuncture benefits being added to the essential health benefit benchmark for Colorado. Please read below to find out what you can do to help get acupuncture as an essential health benefit.

Kacey Wardle, L.Ac.

President, AAC Board of Directors



## ***ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING APRIL 18, 2021***

***UPDATED TIME 12pm to 1:30pm***

The AAC Board will conduct its Annual Business Meeting via zoom on Sunday, April 18, 2021 starting at 12 noon. We need as many members as possible to attend so that we can meet our quorum and vote on new board members, changes to the bylaws, and any other matters that members are interested in. There will be an opportunity to field questions from members on all of the issues that the AAC committees have been working on. The AAC's lobbyist, Lara Lee Hullinghorst, will also be on hand to answer questions.

Register in advance for this webinar:

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_GFR9nbLSSbKTEPPPOvyE3Q](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GFR9nbLSSbKTEPPPOvyE3Q)

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.



## **Insurance**

The Insurance Committee attended a workshop for setting the benchmark for Essential Health Benefits (EHB). Currently, acupuncture services are not considered an EHB in Colorado, but they could be next year!

Please ask your patients to comment letting decision makers know why acupuncture is important to their health. Also, it would be helpful for the DOI to know how many acupuncture sessions people need in order to benefit from your services.

A sample letter:

*Dear DOI,*

*Thank you for your work in updating Colorado's benchmark plan for Essential Health Benefits. As a person who uses acupuncture, I depend on acupuncture therapy to reduce pain and increase my quality of life. In general, seeing an acupuncturist every other week has kept me out of the hospital and off of opioid medication. As a consumer, I ask that you consider expanding acupuncture coverage for chronic conditions so that I can continue seeing my practitioner weekly.*

*Sincerely,*

*Jane Doe*

## **Public Comment Period for Acupuncture to be an Essential Health Benefit in Colorado is open!**

To submit comments on the proposed changes to the benchmark plan please email Kate Harris (Kate.Harris@state.co.us) and Leilani Russell (Leilani.Russell@state.co.us) before 5pm on Friday April 30th, 2021.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/16HGzRJYpPJ3KQNepXmNdMg7pq1hmTofa>

The Department of Insurance (DOI) is recommending acupuncture become an EHB with a minimum of 6 treatments. This is a fantastic opportunity, and there is room for improvement by mandated a minimum of 12-20 visits instead of 6. This is what our insurance committee chair, Tuesday Wasserman, will be sending to the DOI and her patients - feel free to use as a template for your own communications:

*Dear DOI,*

*Thank you for your work on updating Colorado's Benchmark Plan for Essential Health Benefits.*

*We are grateful that acupuncture services are being considered in the Benchmark Plan*

*Acupuncture therapy helps individuals to manage pain and has been shown to reduce opioid dependency and usage.*

*Unfortunately, a minimum of 6 sessions is not enough to tackle most pain cases. Research has shown that when using acupuncture for chronic pain, a minimum of 10 sessions is recommended and more treatment might be required depending on the condition.*

*The Veteran's Affairs(VA) and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid (CMS )offer 20 sessions per calendar year, with the opportunity to seek additional treatment when deemed necessary.*

*I respectfully ask that you consider increasing the limited number of sessions for acupuncture therapy to 20 sessions per year based on clinical research and national recommendations.*

*Kind regards, \*Acupuncturist's Name\**

A sample template to send to patients:

*Dear (Patient),*

*How has acupuncture helped you? How many sessions did it take to resolve your issue?*

*Could you please take a few minutes to let the Department of Insurance know how much acupuncture therapy has helped you and how many sessions you think should be made available to you as a consumer?*

*To submit comments on the proposed changes to the benchmark plan please email Kate Harris (Kate.Harris@state.co.us) and Leilani Russell (Leilani.Russell@state.co.us) before 5pm on Friday April 30th, 2021.*

*Thank you,  
(Acupuncture clinic)*

**Thank you for advocating for our profession!**



### **Cigna-ASH Integration - Action Item!**

Many practitioners have been struggling with the news of Cigna integrating with American Specialty Health (ASH). This will affect all Cigna health plans.

While the AAC can not lobby or work for increased reimbursement rates, you and your patients certainly can.

1) If you have a LinkedIn account, you can message Anthony Cali, Vice President of Cigna Network Management (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/anthony-cali-741a99150>) as well as the author of the letter of notification that Massachusetts practitioners received. Please be professional and stick to the key facts and represent our profession in the utmost respectable manner.

2) If you choose not to contract with ASH, each provider needs to contact their Cigna patients and explain why they will no longer be in the network, and/or why they won't join the network. Sharing this reimbursement amount with patients may drive the point home. Patients need to complain to Cigna AND their HR, if their insurance is employer funded, or complain directly to Cigna if they purchase it directly.

We have been advised that Cigna WILL listen to patients, and of course patients' employers will as well.

Please note: This information cannot come directly from the AAC, it must come from Cigna's members, your patients. A phone call is always more powerful if they can take the time.

Below is the phone information that we've been given along with a phone script to share with your patients so they don't have to re-invent the wheel.

Here is the information we were given:

Phone: 1 (800) 244-6224

Include the following information:

Provider Name

Tax ID/NPI

Service address

Reason for termination

Effective Date

## Sample Phone/ Letter Script For Patients To Use:

To (Cigna),

*Because of the integration of Cigna with American Specialty Health for acupuncture services and the implementation of ASH's significantly lower reimbursement rates, my acupuncturist of (X years) is terminating his/her contract with Cigna. ASH reimbursement rates are so low that my acupuncturist cannot sustain his/her practice and take them. ASH severely limits the amount of time spent with patients to 1 unit which is just 15 minutes equaling around \$xx per treatment. A typical acupuncture treatment is 45-60 minutes so this is not nearly enough time to give appropriate quality care. This change will end up costing my acupuncture practitioner, which is not sustainable for his/her practice. For this reason, I will not be able to receive acupuncture treatments which I rely on for (what you get treated for). Please reconsider this drastic move on behalf of the best interest of your members and reinstate Cigna's previous reimbursement rates.*

*Sincerely,  
(patient name)*



### **2022 Conference**

The AAC Annual conference has been rescheduled for April 22-23, 2022 at the Marriott in Westminster. In the meantime, look forward to some virtual trainings and in-person events this summer and fall.



## Animal Acupuncture

Do you love animals and wish our license included our furry friends? The AAC is looking for acupuncturists who are passionate about wanting to allow acupuncture on animals in Colorado and interested in helping the AAC work towards this goal. Needless to say, this would include appropriate safety and training standards and collaboration with veterinarians. Please email [info@acucol.com](mailto:info@acucol.com).



### Stakeholder Town Hall:

There will be a member stakeholder town hall meeting with the AAC's lobbyist, Lara Lee Hullinghorst on Wednesday, 5/19 from 6:30-7:30 to discuss legislation.



The latest newsletter from ASA is jam packed with tons of info! If you missed it in your inbox, you can read it here:

[https://mailchi.mp/asacu/asa-march-2021-newsletter?e=\[UNIQID\]](https://mailchi.mp/asacu/asa-march-2021-newsletter?e=[UNIQID])



01-Jan-2021 to 31-Mar-2021

**47**  
Households



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**\$ 421.60**  
**Total Donations**

Thank you to everyone's ongoing support in the King Sooper's Community Reward Program! Every little bit counts.

If you don't already know, you can earn money for the AAC when you use your loyalty card at King Soopers or City Market. You, your family, and your friends can all help raise money for the AAC just by doing the shopping you already do.

Register your rewards card from King Soopers or City Market to the AAC Non-Profit Organization (NPO, number AP717), and the AAC will earn cash for purchases. It only takes a few moments to set it up. Here's how:

#### Online

- Sign into your Kings Soopers/City Market account. New users please create an account.
- Look for King Soopers Community Rewards (or City Market) selection under the MENU > SAVINGS > KING SOOPERS COMMUNITY REWARDS tab.
- Search for the Acupuncture Association of Colorado either by name or AP717 and click enroll.

#### Phone app

- Sign into your Kings Soopers/City Market account on the phone app.
- Tap the 3 bars menu tab on the upper right. Tap Rewards. Tap Community Rewards.
- Follow the instructions for enrollment. Search for the Acupuncture Association of Colorado either by name or AP717 and click enroll.

Easy-peasy. It's free money for the AAC that doesn't cost you anything.

The AAC thanks you!

For any questions contact the AAC at 303.572.8744 or email [info@acucol.com](mailto:info@acucol.com)

*Our mission is to advance the profession of Acupuncture and Chinese Herbal Medicine as an integral component of health care in Colorado.*