



To: The Joint Legislative Program Evaluation Oversight Committee
From: Michael J. Tadych, Board Attorney
Re: The North Carolina Acupuncture Licensing Board
Date: 5 April 2016

My name is Mike Tadych. I am the Board Attorney for the North Carolina Acupuncture Licensing Board. From the Board and its more than 500 licensed acupuncturists, thank you for allowing me to speak to you today.

The Acupuncture Board and its licensees are *gravely* concerned that the current recommendation to eliminate the Acupuncture Board needlessly brushes aside the importance of safety for North Carolinians and the serious, negative consequences that will arise if the Acupuncture Board is dissolved. To be direct, elimination of the Acupuncture Board is a *colossal* mistake.

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The Acupuncture Board regulates a *medical* profession. Acupuncture is a health care system developed over THOUSANDS of years that has specific diagnostic parameters and treatments. UNC Health System, Duke Hospital and other hospitals from across the state hire NC licensed acupuncturists to deliver acupuncture care. Treatments include insertion of long acupuncture needles into patients' bodies. Effective regulation of this profession and protection of North Carolinians from harm can only come from a regulatory body with proven, specific and in-depth knowledge of the profession. This is not the stuff of Yelp or Angie's List.

The prospect of eliminating this licensing board fails to acknowledge the unique skill, comprehensive clinical training and competence of licensed acupuncturists as independent medical care providers. More importantly, it fails to embrace the real harm

to the public which will occur if acupuncture becomes unregulated in our state. Do we really want to become a haven for acupuncturists from other states who have lost their license to practice or a place where no one checks whether an acupuncturist cannot pass his or her national competency exam?

Perhaps there's another way to make my point. This is an acupuncture needle. It is made of surgical stainless steel and is approximately 5 inches in length. By most standards, I am considered to be highly educated. I have bachelor's and law degrees. I have a license to practice law. I've spent a little more than a year serving as the Acupuncture Board's attorney in addition to being a long-time acupuncture patient.

Yet, I will be the first to tell you that absolutely none of this makes me qualified to insert this needle into anyone here. By eliminating

the Acupuncture Board and the regulation of Acupuncture in this state, the General Assembly will be saying to all of North Carolina that I am now qualified. Which one of you wants to be first?

I hope my *point* is clear. Do not eliminate the regulation of this important, effective, medical profession. The safety of North Carolinians depends on it. Thank you.