



Jane Cheung, R. TCMP & Associates

Registered Acupuncturists and Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners (CTCMPAO)
Acupuncture | Gua Sha | Cupping | Tuina | Herbal Medicine | Laser Therapy

Dear Human Resources:

I have recently come to the realization that my extended health care benefits do not cover acupuncture performed by Registered Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners (R.TCMP)/Registered Acupuncturists (R.Ac) who are Members of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of Ontario (CTCMPAO).

I request that acupuncture treatment provided by an acupuncturist (i.e. CTCMPAO) be included in our extended health care coverage.

Refined over thousands of years and supported by clinical evidence, acupuncture improves mental health, treats both acute and chronic pain, and offers benefits to wide variety of additional conditions; all with excellent cost efficiency and minimal side effects. There is an ever-increasing demand for high quality acupuncture.

In 2016, a 2-year retroactive United States study of 89,000 pain management network patients treated by 6,000 acupuncturists found 93% of respondents nationally said acupuncture was successful in treating their primary condition. There are studies suggesting that acupuncture is cost-effective for chronic pain and mental health managementⁱ.

In Ontario, acupuncture performed by R.TCMP's/R.Ac's ensures we receive the full clinical scope and benefits of acupuncture performed with high quality skills, and exacting safety standards. This ensures we receive the maximal benefits that acupuncture can provide.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Enclosure:
Fact Sheet

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FACT SHEET

Scope of TCM/A

CTCMPAO members are qualified to use acupuncture to treat an extremely wide range of conditions. In Ontario, the list of conditions treated with acupuncture and TCM includes, but is not limited to:

- Allergies
- Anxiety and Stress
- Asthma
- Back Pain
- Fatigue
- Headache/Migraine
- Infertility
- Constipation

Additional conditions treatable by Registered Acupuncturists can be found on the CTCMPAO website:

http://www.ctcmpao.on.ca/resources/forms-and-documents/List_of_Common_TCM_Diseases_and_Conditions.pdf

In contrast, other health professions that perform acupuncture as an adjunct are limited to treating conditions within their scope of practice.

Theory of TCM/A

Acupuncture is a component of an intricate and integrated health care system that has been developed and refined over thousands of years. For the past two decades, there has been increasing research that has demonstrated the clinical benefits that TCM and Acupuncture can provide. In TCM, acupuncture is just one of many available modalities of treatment. Beyond acupuncture, R.TCMP's/R.Ac's in Ontario additionally can offer gua sha, cupping, Chinese herbs, diet and exercise advice, or Chinese medical massage (tui na).

Training and Education of an Acupuncturist/TCM Practitioner in Ontario

To become a R.TCMP/R.Ac, CTCMPAO students are required to have a minimum of three years of academic training in Traditional Chinese Medicine, along with at least 500 hours of direct patient contact. Since the establishment of the CTCMPAO in Ontario, potential practitioners must successfully pass a rigorous Registration Examination and complete the Safety Program and Jurisprudence Course for registration with the CTCMPAO.

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Supported by Clinical Evidence and Cost Efficiency

*Following are some of the key studies demonstrating that acupuncture is safe, effective, and cost-effective for **chronic pain**ⁱⁱ:*

- I. Acupuncture is safe: In a cumulative review of more than 1 million acupuncture treatments, the risk of a serious adverse event with acupuncture was estimated to be 0.05 per 10,000 treatments and 0.55 per 10,000 individual patients. Most common side effects were bleeding at needle site and localized needling pain. Similar findings were also reported in 229,230 patients with more than 2 million visits.
- II. Acupuncture is effective for chronic pain, including low back pain: In patient-level meta-analyses of randomized controlled trials that included ~18,000–21,000 patients with chronic musculoskeletal pain, acupuncture was found to be substantially better than standard care and significantly better than sham acupuncture. Approximately 20% of the population included in these trials are aged 65 years or older.
- III. The beneficial effects of acupuncture persist beyond the course of treatment: In a meta-analysis of 17,922 patients with chronic non-malignant pain, ~90% of the pain-relieving effects of acupuncture relative to controls were sustained at 12 months.
- IV. Acupuncture is cost-effective for chronic pain management: In two randomized trials that included >12,000 patients with low back pain, acupuncture treatment was associated with clinically meaningful improvement in quality of life with a modest incremental increase in cost greatly below the \$50,000 cost per quality ratio.

Mental Healthⁱⁱⁱ:

- I. Depression has the fourth highest burden of disease, and is expected to have the highest in high-income countries by 2030.
- II. A number of non-pharmacological high-intensity psychological interventions are available for the treatment of moderate to severe depression, or mild depression with inadequate response.
- III. Acupuncture is cost-effective compared with counselling or usual care alone, although the ranking of counselling and acupuncture depends on the relative cost of delivering these interventions.

ⁱ Does Acupuncture Provided Within a Managed Care Setting Meet Patient Expectations and Quality Outcomes?: A 2-Year Retrospective Study of 89,000 Managed Network Patients. (2016). *American Specialty Health Incorporated Health Services Department*

ⁱⁱ Liebert, M. A. (2019). *Acupuncture for Chronic Low Back Pain: Recommendations to Medicare/Medicaid from the Society for Acupuncture Research. The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine.*

ⁱⁱⁱ Spackman, E., Richmond, S., Sculpher, M., Bland, M., Brealey, S., Gabe, R., Hopton, A., Keding, A., Lansdown, H., Perren, S., Torgerson, D., Watt, I. and MacPherson, H. (2019). *Cost-Effectiveness Analysis of Acupuncture, Counselling and Usual Care in Treating Patients with Depression: The Results of the ACUDep Trial.*