



College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of British Columbia (CTCMA)

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CTCMA is an official body established in 2000 by the Government of British Columbia, Canada to regulate the practice of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and acupuncture in the Province. The College is a self regulatory body that operates under the auspices of the Provincial Government through the Health Professions Act and the Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists Regulation and Bylaws.

Qualified TCM practitioners are designated one of four titles depending on the scope of practice:

- **Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine (Dr.TCM)**
- **Registered TCM practitioner (R.TCM.P)**
- **Registered Acupuncturist (R.Ac.)**
- **Registered TCM herbalist (R.TCM.H)**

NEWS RELEASE - TO BE RELEASED IMMEDIATELY April 11, 2003

CHOOSING DOCTORS IN CHINESE MEDICINE TO BE EASIER AND SAFER

Choosing a Chinese medicine doctor will become easier and safer after April 12, 2003. The province's requirement to license all practitioners of Chinese medicine is now effective.

"This is a project that has been 20 years in the making, and it has been a challenge," said Mason Loh, Q.C., Chairman of the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists, the regulatory college created by the B.C. government to oversee the practice. "Some people say that bringing a 3000 years healing system in line with other health care professions is impossible. Well, this registration has shown that it can be done."

The licensing system, sometimes called "registration", is equivalent to that of other health professions like doctors and dentists. Individuals go through long educational training and must pass licensing examinations. In addition, the College mandated every applicant to go through a series of safety courses spread over several years. They must also carry at least \$1 million malpractice insurance so patients have recourse in cases of medical negligence.

"The College is established to protect the interest of the public," commented Loh. "It is the authority where patients can go if they have any concern about the practice of a TCM practitioner. The College will investigate and if warranted, has the authority to discipline the offending practitioner."

Most people thought that Chinese Medicine consists of only herbal medicine. "Not so," said Randy Wong, Registrar of the College. "In addition to herbal medicine, there are acupuncture, Tuina (an extensive form of acupressure and massage), Food Cure and rehabilitative exercises like Qigong and Tai Chi."

All areas are now recognized in law with their own licensing standards.

"Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) covers such a wide range of treatment that treatments like acupuncture and herbology are distinct professions in their own rights," said Wong.

Qualified practitioners are granted one of four titles depending of their training and practice: Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Registered TCM Practitioner, Registered TCM Herbalist and Registered Acupuncturist.

After April 12, no one is allowed to practise Chinese Medicine without a valid licence. The public should only go to licensed practitioners and report any illegal practice to the College. Public are welcome to check out whether a practitioner is licensed with the College by phone at 604-638-3108 or via the internet at www.ctcma.bc.ca/registrants.htm.

In the upcoming months, there will be a transition period in which individuals who have applied for a licence but have not been fully processed will be issued a Limited Registration where their practice will be supervised, pending the outcome of certain assessment and evaluation.

The current group of approved practitioners consist of people who have gone through the licensing examination route and the grandparenting route. The grandparenting route is a one-time process for people who have already been practising in the province before regulation comes into effect. They are evaluated through various tests and assessments to ascertain that their qualifications are significantly the same as the established standards.

Among the 439 applications for grandparenting of the doctor title, slightly less than half (213) have been evaluated to meet qualifications.

“The evaluation was long and tedious,” said Wong. “It took us one and a half year to complete it. One of the horrendous tasks is in verifying and converting overseas credentials, as well as evaluating apprenticeship programs, which is an effective and prevalent form of teaching in certain parts of the world.”

In the process, the College also discovered 16 cases of fraudulent credentials. They will be turned over to the proper authorities for further actions, which may lead to prosecution.

STATISTICS:

Total applications for grandparenting (all 3 classes of licence): 554

Doctor of TCM licence approved: 213

Registered TCM Practitioner licence approved: 40

Registered TCM Herbalist licence approved: 36

Total licence approved through grandparenting (all 3 classes): 289

Total licence approved through regular registration: 44

Existing number of Registered Acupuncturists: 583

Total number of TCM practitioners in British Columbia on April 12, 2003: 916

**PRACTICE SCOPE OF THE 4 CLASSES OF REGISTRANTS AND
EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

	Acupuncture	Herbology	All TCM modalities (Food Cure, Tuina & Rehabilitative exercises, in addition to acupuncture & herbology)	Accept referrals from other TCM practitioners	Years of TCM education required (all TCM schools require 2 years of post-secondary education for entry)
Acupuncturist (R.Ac.)	√				3
Herbalist (R.TCM.H)		√			3
Practitioner (R.TCM.P)			√		4
Doctor (Dr. TCM)			√	√	5

For further information, please contact:

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