

March 16, 2026

House Health Committee
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland

RE: HB 1527 – Complementary and Alternative Health Care Practice Act
Position: UNFAVORABLE

Chair Bagnall, Vice Chair Cullison, and Members of the House Health Committee:

My name is **Dr. Lindy Burns**, and I serve as **President of the Maryland Association of Acupuncture and East Asian Medicine (MAAEAM)**, the professional organization representing licensed acupuncturists practicing throughout the State of Maryland. On behalf of our members and the patients they serve across Maryland, I respectfully submit **strong opposition to House Bill 1527**.

While this legislation may be intended to expand access to complementary health practices, its practical effect would be to create a significant regulatory loophole allowing individuals to provide health-related services without the training, education, or oversight required of licensed healthcare professionals in Maryland. HB 1527 authorizes individuals to practice complementary or alternative health care **without obtaining a license, certification, or authorization issued under Maryland law**. This approach weakens the healthcare regulatory framework designed to protect Maryland patients.

Licensed acupuncturists in Maryland complete **extensive graduate-level education and clinical training**, including thousands of hours of coursework in anatomy, physiology, pathology, and East Asian medical theory. Practitioners must pass national board examinations and remain accountable to the **Maryland State Acupuncture Board**, which exists to ensure patient safety and professional standards. These requirements exist because acupuncture and East Asian medicine are complex healthcare systems that require substantial training and clinical judgment to practice safely.

HB 1527 broadly defines complementary and alternative health care to include practices such as **acupressure, herbalism, qigong, bodywork, energetic healing, and traditional oriental practices**. These modalities are foundational components of East Asian medicine and are routinely integrated into the care provided by licensed acupuncturists. Allowing individuals to offer these services without training or licensure creates an unregulated parallel marketplace where individuals may provide services that appear indistinguishable from those offered by licensed practitioners, but without the safeguards that protect patients.

This creates a serious **consumer protection concern**. Patients seeking care often assume that individuals providing traditional healing practices have undergone formal training and are subject to professional oversight. Under this legislation, individuals with little or no education in health sciences could legally offer services that closely resemble licensed healthcare practice. A written disclosure stating that the practitioner may not hold a healthcare license provides minimal protection for patients who may not understand the difference between licensed professionals and unregulated practitioners.

For licensed acupuncturists in Maryland, this bill also undermines the professional standards that our members have worked diligently to establish. Practitioners have invested years of education, clinical training, and financial resources to meet Maryland's licensure requirements and to practice within a regulated healthcare system designed to protect the public.

The Maryland Association of Acupuncture and East Asian Medicine strongly supports safe and responsible access to complementary health services. However, expanding access should never come at the expense of **patient safety, consumer protection, and professional accountability**.

For these reasons, on behalf of our members and the patients they serve throughout Maryland, I respectfully urge the committee to give **House Bill 1527 an unfavorable report**.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Lindy Burns, DOM, L.Ac., MA, MAc, C-IAYT

President, Maryland Association of Acupuncture & East Asian Medicine

lindyburnsdom@gmail.com

361-688-4725