



American Holistic Nurses Association
800 SW Jackson St., Suite 1012, Topeka KS, 66611
(785) 234-1712 | director@ahna.org | www.ahna.org

December 16th 2025

Maryland Department of Health
Office of Health Care Quality / Board of Acupuncture
201 W. Preston Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

Dear Sir or Madam,

On behalf of the **American Holistic Nurses Association** (AHNA), a national professional association representing nurses and other healthcare professionals committed to integrative and holistic approaches to care, we respectfully submit this letter to clarify the longstanding, interdisciplinary nature of **acupressure** and to express our concern regarding any interpretation that would restrict its practice exclusively to licensed acupuncturists.

Acupressure is a **manual, non-invasive modality** with deep historical roots that predate the formal professionalization and licensure of acupuncture as a regulated discipline in the United States. Historically and educationally, acupressure has developed as a component of **Asian bodywork and therapeutic touch traditions**, many of which have been responsibly incorporated into the scope of practice and educational curricula of multiple licensed health professions.

From a contemporary professional and educational standpoint:

- **Acupressure is routinely included within massage therapy education and scope of practice**, nationally.
- **Nurses**, including those practicing holistic and integrative nursing, have long utilized acupressure as a complementary, non-pharmacologic intervention for symptom management (e.g., pain, anxiety, nausea, stress reduction).
- **Physical therapists, occupational therapists, chiropractors, estheticians, and other allied health professionals** may also receive training in acupressure techniques appropriate to their professional roles and regulatory frameworks.

Within nursing in particular, acupressure aligns squarely with:

- Holistic nursing standards and competencies
- Non-invasive, patient-centered care models
- Evidence-informed symptom management strategies
- The ethical mandate to reduce harm and support whole-person care

Nurses do not represent acupressure as acupuncture, nor do they diagnose or treat conditions outside their professional scope. Rather, acupressure is employed as a **supportive, adjunctive modality**, consistent with nursing education, licensure, and professional standards.

Accordingly, **AHNA** affirms the position that:

1. **Acupressure is not exclusive to the licensed practice of acupuncture.**
2. **Nurses and other licensed healthcare professionals may appropriately practice acupressure** when it is consistent with their education, training, and scope of practice.
3. Regulatory interpretations should reflect the **interdisciplinary, historically accurate, and educationally grounded reality** of acupressure practice in the United States.

We respectfully encourage the Maryland Department of Health to consider these perspectives in its deliberations and to engage collaboratively with nursing and allied health organizations to ensure regulatory clarity that protects the public while supporting evidence-based, integrative care.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for your continued commitment to safe, ethical, and patient-centered healthcare in the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,



Dr. Joshua R. Paszkiewicz

DHA, MSN, LCPC, RN, AHN-BC, NEA-BC, PMH-BC, CPH

Executive Director, American Holistic Nurses Association