



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF  
COLLEGES OF OSTEOPATHIC MEDICINE

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

September 30, 2010

Josephine P. Briggs, M.D.  
Director  
National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine  
National Institutes of Health  
9000 Rockville Pike  
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

**RE: Comments on National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine  
Draft Strategic Plan: 2010**

Dear Dr. Briggs:

On behalf of the American Association of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine (AACOM), I am pleased to submit comments on the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) Draft Strategic Plan (DSP): 2010. AACOM represents the administrators, faculty, and students of the nation's 26 colleges of osteopathic medicine and four branch campuses that offer the doctor of osteopathic medicine degree. Today, more than 18,000 students are enrolled in osteopathic medical schools. One in five U.S. medical students is training to be an osteopathic physician.

AACOM applauds the NCCAM for its leadership and vision in advancing scientific research and technologies on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM). AACOM understands the necessity of the role NCCAM plays in enhancing and expanding CAM practices and interventions to improve health and increase health promotion. AACOM appreciates the opportunity to provide input during this important implementation process.

AACOM affirms the NCCAM mission and acknowledges that it is amiable with the osteopathic profession's focus on primary care and a patient-centered approach. Furthermore, expanding research in areas, such as manipulative/manual CAM interventions and practices (Strategic Objective 2, p.17) will further support the osteopathic profession's research priorities.

AACOM appreciates the focus given to treatments such as acupuncture; however, we believe that more focus on manual therapies is necessary. Specifically, in addition to outcomes research, investigation is needed on the mechanisms of pain syndromes related to back and other musculoskeletal conditions for which manual therapies are frequently provided, as well as research on mechanisms of action related to these therapies. AACOM asks that NCCAM provide clarification in its DSP on the use of the term "chiropractic", either as an adjective or

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noun, when describing the CAM area of manipulative and body-based practices. The use of the term “chiropractic” in the DSP may give the misguided view that only chiropractors engage in manipulative and body-based practices. In relation to this issue, AACOM recommends that consideration be given to the development of a glossary of standard language for manual therapies, which would supplement knowledge to the larger questions involved. This would enable researchers from the various disciplines to better collaborate and/or investigate therapies. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the 2010 NCCAM Draft Strategic Plan. If you have questions or require further information, please contact Pamela Murphy, Acting Director of Government Relations, at (301) 968-4151, or [pmurphy@aacom.org](mailto:pmurphy@aacom.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "SC Shannon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Stephen C. Shannon, D.O., M.P.H.  
President and CEO