

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2005**

**HOUSE BILL 1357
RATIFIED BILL**

AN ACT AUTHORIZING THE ACUPUNCTURE LICENSING BOARD TO EMPLOY CERTAIN PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS; TO CLARIFY QUALIFICATIONS FOR INITIAL LICENSURE, LICENSE RENEWAL, AND INACTIVE, SUSPENDED, EXPIRED, AND LAPSED LICENSES; TO CLARIFY CONTINUING EDUCATION; AND TO INCREASE AND ESTABLISH CERTAIN FEES.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

SECTION 1. G.S. 90-454 reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-454. Powers and duties of Board.

The Board may:

- (1) Deny, issue, suspend, and revoke licenses in accordance with rules adopted by the Board, and may collect fees, investigate violations of this Article, and otherwise administer the provisions of this Article.
- (2) Sponsor or authorize other entities to offer continuing education programs, and approve continuing education requirements for license renewal.
- (3) Establish requirements ~~for~~ for, collect fees from, and approve schools of acupuncture in this State. The requirements shall be at least as stringent as the core curricula standards of the Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.
- (4) Sue to enjoin violations of G.S. 90-452. The court may issue an injunction even though no person has yet been injured as a result of the unauthorized practice.
- (5) Adopt and use a seal to authenticate official documents of the Board.
- (6) Employ and fix the compensation of personnel and professional advisors, including legal counsel, as may be needed to carry out its functions, and purchase, lease, rent, sell, or otherwise dispose of personal and real property for the operations of the Board.
- (7) Expend funds as necessary to carry out the provisions of this Article from revenues and interest generated by fees collected under this Article.
- (8) Adopt rules to implement this Article in accordance with Chapter 150B of the General Statutes.
- (9) Establish practice parameters to become effective July 1, 1995. The practice parameters shall be applicable to general and specialty areas of practice. The Board shall review the parameters on a regular basis and shall require licensees to identify parameters being utilized, the plan of care, and treatment modalities utilized in accordance with the plan of care."

SECTION 2. G.S. 90-455 reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-455. Qualifications for license; ~~renewal-renewal; inactive, suspended, expired, or lapsed license.~~

(a) Initial License. – To receive a license to practice acupuncture, a person shall meet all of the following requirements:

- (1) Submit a completed application as required by the Board.
- (2) Submit any fees required by the Board.
- (3) ~~Successfully complete~~ Submit proof of successful completion of a licensing examination administered or approved by the Board.
- (4) Provide documentary evidence of having met one of the following standards of education, training, or demonstrated experience:
 - a. ~~Successfully complete~~ Successful completion of a three-year postgraduate acupuncture college or training program approved by the Board.
 - b. Continuous licensure to practice acupuncture by an agency of another state or another state whose qualifications for licensure meet or exceed those of this State for at least 10 years before application for licensure in this State during which time no disciplinary actions were taken or are pending against the applicant and submitting proof to the Board that the applicant has fulfilled at least an average of 20 continuing education units in acupuncture or health care-related studies for each of the 10 years preceding application for licensure.
- (5) ~~Successfully complete~~ Submit proof of successful completion of the Clean Needle Technique Course offered by the Council of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.
- (6) Be of good moral character.
- (7) Is not currently or has not engaged in any practice or conduct that would constitute grounds for disciplinary action pursuant to G.S. 90-456.
- (8) Submit a form signed by the applicant attesting to the intention of the applicant to adhere fully to the ethical standards adopted by the Board.

(b) Renewal of License. – The license to practice acupuncture shall be renewed every two years. Upon submitting all required declarations, documents, and fees required by the Board for renewal, the applicant's license shall remain in good standing for a period of up to 120 days during which time the Board shall meet to review and act upon the application for renewal. To renew a license, a person shall complete 40 hours of Board-approved Continuing Education Units within each renewal period. an applicant shall:

- (1) Submit a completed application as required by the Board.
- (2) Submit any fees required by the Board.
- (3) Upon request by the Board, submit proof of completion of 40 hours of Board-approved continuing education units within each renewal period.

(c) Inactive License. – A licensed acupuncturist who is not actively engaged in the practice of acupuncture in this State and who does not wish to renew the license may direct the Board to place the license on inactive status. A license may remain on inactive status for a period not to exceed eight years from the date the license was placed on inactive status. Upon an applicant's proof of completion of 40 hours of Board-approved continuing education units, payment of all fees, a determination by the Board that the applicant is not engaged in any prohibited activities that would constitute the basis for discipline as set forth in G.S. 90-456, and has not engaged in any of those prohibited activities during the period of time the license has been on inactive status, the Board may activate the license of the applicant.

(d) Suspended License. – A suspended license is subject to the renewal requirements of this section and may be renewed as provided in this section. This renewal does not entitle the licensed person to engage in the licensed activity or in any other conduct or activity in violation of the order or judgment by which the license was suspended, until the license is reinstated. If a license revoked on disciplinary grounds is

reinstated and requires renewal, the licensed person shall pay the renewal fee and any applicable late fee.

(e) Expired License. – A license that has expired as a result of failure to renew pursuant to subsection (b) of this section may be renewed no later than two years after its expiration. The date of renewal shall be the date the Board acts to approve the renewal. To apply for renewal of an expired license, the applicant shall:

- (1) File an application for renewal on a form provided by the Board.
- (2) Submit proof of completion of all continuing education requirements.
- (3) Pay all accrued renewal fees, along with an expired license fee.

(f) Lapsed License. – A license that has lapsed as a result of not being renewed within two years after the license expired or not reactivated within eight years after the license lapsed is deemed inactive. A lapsed license may not be renewed, reactivated, or reinstated. A person with a lapsed license may apply to obtain a new license pursuant to subsection (a) of this section."

SECTION 3. G.S. 90-457 reads as rewritten:

"§ 90-457. Fees.

The Board may establish fees, not to exceed the following amounts, ~~to cover the cost of services rendered:~~ amounts:

- (1) For an application Application and an examination, one hundred dollars (\$100.00).
- (2) For issuance Issuance of a license, five hundred dollars (\$500.00).
- (3) For renewal Renewal of a license, three hundred dollars (\$300.00).
- (4) For the late renewal Renewal of a license, an additional late fee of ~~seventy five dollars (\$75.00)~~ two hundred dollars (\$200.00).
- (5) Duplicate license fee, twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).
- (6) Duplicate wall certificate fee, fifty dollars (\$50.00).
- (7) Labels for licensed acupuncturists, one hundred fifty dollars (\$150.00).
- (8) Returned check fee, forty dollars (\$40.00).
- (9) Licensure verification, forty dollars (\$40.00).
- (10) Name change, twenty-five dollars (\$25.00).
- (11) Continuing education program approval fee, fifty dollars (\$50.00).
- (12) Continuing education provider approval fee, two hundred dollars (\$200.00).
- (13) Initial school application fee, one thousand dollars (\$1,000).
- (14) Renewal school approval fee, seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750.00).
- (15) Inactive license renewal fee, fifty dollars (\$50.00), payment due for each two-year extension."

SECTION 4. Article 30 of Chapter 90 of the General Statutes is amended by adding the following new section to read:

"§ 90-457.1. Continuing education.

(a) Applicants for license renewal shall complete all required continuing education units during the two calendar years immediately preceding the license renewal date.

(b) The Board shall set the minimum hours for study of specific subjects within the scope of practice of acupuncture. The Board shall set the maximum hours for subjects that have content relating to any health service and are relevant to the practice of acupuncture. In addition to formally organized courses, the Board may approve courses, such as personal training in nonaccredited programs and teaching diagnosis and treatment, as long as these courses have received prior approval by the Board.

(c) For purposes of this Article, one continuing education unit is defined as one contact hour or 50 minutes.

(d) The Board may choose to audit the records of any licensee who has reported and sworn compliance with the continuing education requirement. The audit of any licensee shall not take place more than every two years.

(e) Failure to comply with the continuing education requirements shall prohibit license renewal and result in the license reverting to expired status at the end of the renewal period.

(f) A licensee may apply to the Board for an extension of time to complete the portion of continuing education requirements that the licensee is unable to meet due to such unforeseeable events as military duty, family emergency, or prolonged illness. The Board may, at its discretion, grant an extension for a maximum of one licensing period. The Board shall receive the request no later than 30 days before the license renewal date. The applicant shall attest that the request is a complete and accurate statement, and the request shall contain the following:

- (1) An explanation of the licensee's failure to complete the continuing education requirements.
- (2) A list of continuing education courses and hours that the licensee has completed.
- (3) The licensee's plan for satisfying the continuing education requirements."

SECTION 5. This act is effective when it becomes law.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 23rd day of August, 2005.

Beverly E. Perdue
President of the Senate

James B. Black
Speaker of the House of Representatives

Michael F. Easley
Governor

Approved _____, m. this _____ day of _____, 2005