

How decisions made by the California Acupuncture Board and agencies it hires have affected my life:

Two months after graduating with my MSTOM from the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine I started my own massage therapy practice in June of 2012 with the mindset that I would be incorporating acupuncture into it after passing the August 2012 CALE. I studied hard while juggling marketing my massage business. Many of my clients were excited for me and were interested in becoming future patients of mine after speaking with them about how Traditional Chinese Medicine could help them with their health challenges. Then in September I got my 74% “failing grade.” I was, and still am, devastated. I was confused about why this was not considered a passing score. Why did I receive a 12 out of 11 on the public health section? Why did the CAB brush this error under the rug and say they made an error in that section and then adjust the numbers in other sections while all my numbers stayed the same? Why was no explanation ever given? Why won't they respond to our letters, e-mails, phone calls? What's taking so long for this investigation to conclude? My questions could go on and on.

Meanwhile, I continued with my massage practice, wondering about everything. Would I have to retake this exam in February? Should I start studying now? Where do I begin studying for such an obtusely and error-filled exam with questions that I had never even heard of before? A few weeks after the November meeting the CAB had I realized things were not changing anytime soon and I'd most likely have to retake. I had to borrow money from my parents to pay for the February exam because we don't have anything left in our savings or budget for this. Student loans started piling up in November. Loans for years of knowledge which I could not utilize. Luckily my massage business made just enough to cover my bills November and December but January hit a huge slump. My phone stopped ringing. I have had to put all of my energy towards studying to retake this exam in February that I haven't been able to put any effort towards my business. My marriage has been suffering big time as well with this huge financial hit as all the burden of keeping us afloat has been put on my husband. I am in a constant state of worry and panic about bills and my future. I broke down this month (February) and gave my landlord for my office space my notice to terminate my lease. I also have to terminate my lease with my apartment. We can't afford to stay afloat anymore and have to move in with my parents. Thank God for their support or I don't know what we would do. I am humbled to say the least. Everything is crumbling to pieces around me and I can't hold on to anything anymore.

The CAB prolonging this investigation, pushing back their meetings, not giving us any answers, has left me paralyzed in my life. I have been living in limbo for too long waiting for answers to know when I can take my next step forward to fulfilling my dream of becoming an acupuncturist in my native state of California. I know this letter is 95% emotional but I felt I should let the CAB know just how much they have affected everything in my life since September and if they have any heart or dignity they will give us logical and clear answers instead of blame shifting their problems onto other departments or coming up with excuses such as “they all cheated” or “we don't know how to use our own technology anymore because we are short staffed.” This organization is an abomination to my profession and it needs to either change or be abolished.

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