COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

BOARD OF REGISTRATION IN MEDICINE

COMMITTEE ON ACUPUNCTURE

POLICY 25-02

**ACUPUNCTURE REENTRY**

February 13, 2025

The Committee on Acupuncture hereby issues this Policy for use whenever an Acupuncturist is reentering the profession after a period of time away from the practice of acupuncture. “Acupuncture Reentry” means a return to the clinical practice of Acupuncture or Chinese Herbal Therapy following an extended period of clinical inactivity. The Policy consists of five steps.

**Step 1: How long has the applicant been away from the clinical practice of Acupuncture?**

When an applicant for an initial full acupuncture license, a change of status or a lapsed license has ceased the practice of acupuncture for a period of 2 years immediately preceding the date of the application, the applicant shall be required to demonstrate “current clinical competency.” Current clinical competency means the applicant has the knowledge and the skill to successfully and efficiently provide patient care as of the date of their application. The reason for Current Clinical Competency is to ensure the public that you are ready on Day One to lay hands on a patient.

**Step 2: Can the applicant show Current Clinical Competency?**

The applicant may demonstrate current clinical competency in one or more of the following ways occurring within the past 2 years:

* Taking 60 hours of practice-relevant Continuing Acupuncture Education courses or trainings beyond those required for licensure;
* Being certified or recertified by the National Certification Commission of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM);
* Participating in activities during the period of inactive clinical practice that, to the satisfaction of the Committee on Acupuncture, develop or enhance clinical competency.

The applicant may be required to appear before the Committee on Acupuncture for a personal interview to discuss his/her current clinical competency or a reentry plan.

A determination of current clinical competency is a discretionary decision that is made by the Committee on Acupuncture. If the applicant cannot establish current clinical competency, the applicant will be required to create and complete an acupuncture reentry plan that is approved by the Committee on Acupuncture (COA).

**Step 3: When is the acupuncture license granted? What kind of license is it?**

When current clinical competency is established or when the Reentry Plan is completed, and the applicant has met all other statutory and regulatory licensure requirements, the COA may grant the applicant a full license in Massachusetts.

If current clinical competency is not established, but the applicant has developed a Reentry Plan and the COA has approved the Plan, the Committee on Acupuncture may grant the applicant a non-disciplinary restricted license for the purpose of participating in the Reentry Plan.

* COA Determines Current Clinical Competency → Full license
* Cannot Show CCC but has COA-approved Reentry Plan →

Non-disciplinary Restricted License

* Completes Reentry Plan Successfully → Full license

**Step 4: What does the Acupuncture Reentry Plan look like?**

If the Committee on Acupuncture determines that the applicant has not demonstrated current clinical competency, the applicant will be required to participate in an acupuncture reentry plan. A reentry plan may last from 1 month to 12 months. Each individual is treated on a case-by-case basis.

The goal of every acupuncture reentry plan is to protect patient safety by ensuring that every acupuncture licensee possesses an up-to-date educational background and has a depth of experience in clinical practice.

The Reentry Plan is an educational tool, and is not punitive or disciplinary in nature.

In determining how long and how extensive the reentry plan should be, the COA shall consider the following factors:

* How long has the applicant been out of practice?
* What was the reason for the interruption in practice?
* What is the applicant’s plan for practicing in Massachusetts?
* What skills are required in the intended area of practice?
* How much change has occurred in the area of practice during the period of inactivity?
* Does the applicant have a doctorate or other extensive education?
* Other factors that the COA may consider significant.

The applicant shall meet with the COA at such dates, times and places as directed. The non-disciplinary restricted license will last for the duration of the reentry plan.

The applicant shall identify an experienced acupuncturist who is willing to mentor them. The Mentor shall be approved by the COA, shall sign the Reentry Agreement and shall make a monthly progress report to the COA. The Mentor shall immediately notify the COA if the applicant is not performing satisfactorily and in accordance with the reentry plan.

The Acupuncture Reentry Agreement, which includes the Acupuncture Reentry Plan, is drafted by the applicant. It is signed by the applicant, the Acupuncture Mentor and a representative from the COA or the Director of Licensing. The reentry agreement is binding on all the parties.

When the Reentry Agreement has been signed by all the parties, and the applicant has met all other statutory and regulatory licensure requirements, the COA shall issue the applicant a non-disciplinary restricted license and shall require that the applicant successfully complete the terms of the Reentry Agreement.

**Step 5: Successfully Completing the Reentry Plan**

A Reentry Plan will end one year from its start date, if not sooner by the terms of the Agreement. An extension may be granted by the COA if extenuating circumstances exist.

When the applicant has successfully completed his/her reentry plan, the applicant shall petition the COA to terminate the plan, including in the petition the Mentor’s monthly reports and recommendations. The COA will terminate the non-disciplinary restricted license and issue a full license.

If the applicant does not satisfactorily complete the reentry plan, or if the applicant practices outside the scope of the reentry plan, as determined by the COA, this conduct could constitute misconduct in the practice of acupuncture and could warrant referral to the Enforcement Division or it could provide grounds for the COA to institute a summary suspension of the restricted license.

The Committee on Acupuncture may grant Continuing Acupuncture Education credits for serving as an Acupuncture Mentor. The COA will determine the exact number of credits upon completion of the Reentry Plan.

**ACUPUNCTURE REENTRY AGREEMENT**

This is an agreement between \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Applicant) and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Acupuncture Mentor) and the Committee on Acupuncture of the Board of Registration in Medicine. The parties agree to participate in an educational program known as a Reentry Plan, which is attached to this document and incorporated therein. Also incorporated herein is Policy 25-02, Policy on Acupuncture Reentry.

**Purpose**

The purpose of this Reentry Plan is to ensure patient safety by requiring that all licensees have current clinical competency, consisting of an up-to-date educational background and a depth of recent experience in clinical practice. The Reentry Plan is educational and not punitive. This Reentry Plan is not a disciplinary action by the Committee on Acupuncture.

**Overview**

The Reentry Plan consists of three parts. Part 1 is Shadowing. During this stage, the Applicant will shadow the Mentor and will not have any patient responsibilities. Part 2 is Supervised Practice. During this stage, the Applicant will assume some patient care responsibilities under the direct supervision of the Mentor. In Part 3, Independent Practice while Reporting to the Mentor, the Applicant will examine patients independently and will be required to discuss his/her clinical observations, diagnosis and treatment plan for each patient with the Mentor.

**Mentor Reporting**

The Mentor agrees to submit monthly reports to the Staff Contact. These reports will describe what part of the Plan occurred, the dates, and any valuable performance measures, for example, the number of patient record reviews, random or otherwise. It will be helpful if the Mentor includes in these reports feedback from clinical and administrative staff with regard to the Applicant’s standard of care and professionalism.

**Plan Changes**

By the Mentor with Consent: The length and scope of each of the three Parts of the Reentry Plan can be extended or shortened by the Mentor, as determined in his/her professional judgment. The Mentor agrees to notify the COA or Staff Contact if any part of the Reentry Plan as agreed to is shortened or extended. The Mentor agrees not to implement the change without COA consent. When consensus cannot be reached, the Monitor and the Applicant can ask for a meeting with the COA to discuss the change.

By the COA Only: The Applicant may not change the Mentor listed in the Acupuncture Reentry Plan and approved by the Board or the Licensing Committee. The Applicant may not practice acupuncture in any location other than Workplace(s) address(es) listed in the Reentry Plan and approved by the Committee on Acupuncture.

The Applicant must stop practicing immediately if either the Mentor or the Workplace agreed upon in the Reentry Plan becomes unavailable. If the Applicant wishes to change a Mentor or a Workplace, he/she must petition the COA. The Applicant shall provide the necessary documentation to support the petition. The Applicant cannot resume practice until the COA approves a new Mentor or Workplace.

**Standard of Care**

At all times during the pendency of this Physician Reentry Agreement, the Applicant shall meet or exceed the standard of care applicable to his/her conduct as an acupuncturist. If the Mentor determines that the Applicant’s patient care does not meet the standard of care, the Mentor agrees to notify the COA immediately, by telephone and in writing.

If the applicant does not satisfactorily complete the reentry plan, or if the applicant practices outside the scope of the reentry plan, as determined by the Board, this conduct could constitute misconduct in the practice of medicine and could warrant referral to the Enforcement Division or it could provide grounds for the Board to institute a summary suspension of the restricted license pursuant to 243 CMR 1.03(11).

**Termination of the Agreement**

When the Mentor agrees that the Applicant has successfully completed the Reentry Plan, the Applicant may petition for termination of this Reentry Agreement. The Applicant’s petition shall include the Mentor’s reports and recommendations, if any.

SIGNED:

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Acupuncture Mentor Date

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Representative from COA or Director of Licensing, Date

Attached and Incorporated Herein:

Policy on Acupuncture Reentry and Reentry Plan

**ACUPUNCTURE REENTRY PLAN**

Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

APPLICANT’S BASIC INFORMATION

Applicant Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Board Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Attorney, if any \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Attorney’s Phone Number and Email\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

PROPOSED ACUPUNCTURE MENTOR

Mentor Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Board Number \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number and Email \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

WORKPLACE(S) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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COA Staff Contact? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

DETAILS ON THE REENTRY PLAN

Estimated Plan Duration \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Number of Work Hours per Week (full or part time) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**PART 1: Shadowing**

How long per day? How many weeks? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant’s Role and Responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**PART 2: Supervised Practice**

How many weeks? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant’s Role and Responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**PART 3: Independent Practice while Reporting to Mentor**

How many weeks? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Where? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Applicant’s Role and Responsibilities \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How frequent is Direct Observation? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How frequent is Record Review and # of records? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How frequent is one-on-one Evaluation with Monitor? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Is there anything else about your Acupuncture Reentry Plan that you want the COA to know?

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Is there anything that the COA wishes to add or subtract from the Plan?

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