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Copy California regulations, doctor says

From page 1.

trained and certified competent to protect the public and maintain the profession."

Unscrupulous and untrained operators, particularly those with a set of acupuncture needles, can be dangerous, contended Miriam Bricks, a naturopathic doctor in Aurora.

"It is possible to hurt someone," she said. "Anyone can call themselves an acupuncturist. I'm all for regulating the practice. I have heard of people using dirty, unsterilized needles. We only use disposable needles."

Ontartio's naturopathic doctors, many of whom offer acupuncture, have been regulated since 1925 under the Drugless Practitioners Act and are governed by standards set out by the Ontario Association of Naturopathic Doctors.

However, Ontario's estimated 2,000 practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine and its many regimens, including acupuncture, herbal therapy and massage, answer to no health authorities. Only British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec regulate the profession.

The consensus among the scheduled speakers suggests the government should regulate services offered by all those who call themselves doctors of traditional medicine.

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Miriam Bricks
naturopathic doctor

Dr. Des Rosiers suggested the province follow California's model.

"Traditional medicine has been regulated in California since 1975," he said. "It's the gold standard and works well in a state with 40 million people. It's in place and by not re-inventing the wheel it would save the government millions."

Elis Leung, educated in herbology and acupuncture at Hong Kong's Chinese Medical Institute, recommended all practitioners be regulated regardless of their experience or training.

Consideration, however, should be given to "grandfathering" designations for those who can demonstrate years of impeccable practice. He also asked the panel look at establishing government-approved university and college programs to ensure quality instruction, while preventing "bribery to secure graduation".

"Private schools are unlikely to comply with all the requirements," Dr. Leung said. "Their aim is to run a profitable business."

Shiatsu School of Canada director Kate Kent took offence.

"Private schools are very competent and give students ample clinic experience. The notion we're only exam-oriented is ridiculous."

School executive director and owner Enza Ierullo echoed the sentiment.

"Our students must complete a 1,900 hour acupuncture program and 2,200 hours in the Shiatsu course," she said. "I disagree that only universities should train practitioners."

Mr. Wong and fellow MPPs Mike Colle (Eglinton-Lawrence), Peter Fonseca (Mississauga East) and Richard Patten (Ottawa Centre) are gathering opinions on regulating Chinese medicine.

Their findings will be given to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care by April 15.

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