



## 2012 ANNUAL REPORT

Accreditation Commission for Homeopathic Education in North America

### **Overview of Major Accomplishments:** (in chronological order)

1. Implemented a process for awarding Continuing Professional Development hours that meets the standards for health professional outlined by the 2010 Institute of Medicine report on continuing professional development
2. Established a formal, inclusive and transparent Public Comment Process which will be used to obtain public comments on core ACHENA guidance documents
3. Expanded and diversified the ACHENA board/ commissioners
4. Posted for public comment and finalized the 2012 Accreditation Manual
5. Incorporated distance education standards into the 2012 Accreditation Manual opening the door to accredit “blended” programs
6. Doctoral committee completed work developing draft doctoral standards for review by the full ACHENA commission
7. Worked with the Homeopathic Action Alliance to post for public comment the document titled “Standards for Homeopathic Education and Competencies for Homeopathic Practitioner in North America”

### **Details of ACHENA Accomplishments:**

**Continuing Professional Development:** ACHENA revised its policies, procedures and application process for awarding continuing professional development (CPD) credits to educational programs developed for professional homeopaths. The revised application packet is posted on the ACHENA website at <http://achena.org/CE.htm>. ACHENA will approve distance education programs, enduring programs as well as traditional in-person workshops, seminars and conferences. The website now also includes a listing of all currently approved CPD programs. With the revised process, professional homeopaths will now be assured that workshops or trainings designated by ACHENA for CPD hour will address specific gaps in practice or challenges that professional homeopaths face in their work.

**Public Comment Process:** A core principle of accreditation is that accredited schools meet widely accepted standards established by practitioners, educators, other stakeholders and the community at-large. As such, establishing a formal, inclusive and transparent Public Comment Process is central to the mission of ACHENA. The ACHENA Public Comment policy ensures that when a document is up for public comment, all stakeholders are made aware of the opportunity to comment and are afforded at least 45 days to submit comments. The policy requires ACHENA to clearly delineate areas of a document that have been updated and requires ACHENA to provide a summary of comments received along with ACHENA's deliberations on those comments. The policy holds ACHENA accountable to responding to public comments within 45 days and requires ACHENA to publically post the final document with a notice of adoption to ensure all stakeholders have easy access to updated documents. For a copy of the ACHENA Public Comment Policy, please visit the ACHENA website at <http://achena.org/FormsAndDocuments.htm>.

**Expanding ACHENA:** During 2012, ACHENA recruited several new commissioners and laid the groundwork for additional recruitment in 2013. ACHENA established a formal orientation process for new commissioners to ensure they are prepared to serve effectively. Part of the orientation process included pairing new commissioners with experienced commissioners. New commissioners brought critical skills to ACHENA and also helped expand our representativeness / inclusiveness of all stakeholders in the accreditation process. At the end of 2012, the total number of commissioners was eight. ACHENA commissioners include: three practitioners, one student, one public member, one former homeopathy school administrator, a representative from an un-accredited school, a faculty person from an accredited school and a representative from a homeopathic pharmacy. Newly recruited commissioners include a lawyer, an accountant, and a business person to round out existing expertise around homeopathy, education and training, school administration and program evaluation. ACHENA is poised to recruit additional commissioners in 2013, including individuals with expertise in accreditation, higher education administration as well additional practitioners and homeopathic educators.

**Accreditation Manual 2012:** ACHENA completed an update of our Accreditation Manual that outlines ACHENA standards. The document outlines the two-step process by which an applicant for accreditation must first establish eligibility by meeting eligibility standards and then achieve accreditation by meeting the full scope of accreditation standards. The process for updating the document involved more than a year of work by a committee of commissioners. Key issues under consideration were reviewed during full ACHENA commission meetings. ACHENA employed our newly finalized public comment process to gather community feedback on the document. During the public comment process, ACHENA conducted an open forum with currently accredited schools to get their feedback on the document. Numerous changes to the document were made based on public comments. The final version of the document is posted on the ACHENA website. Accredited schools are expected to implement the new standards by no later than their first year students beginning the course of study in September 2014.

**Distance Education:** In response to the growing availability of homeopathic education via distance education, the 2012 Accreditation Manual included standards related to the inclusion of distance education within the Master's Degree or Professional Homeopathic Practitioner Level Diploma or Certificate Programs. The updated standards allow ACHENA to accredit institutions or programs which employ distance education as part of a blended educational program that includes adequate in-person education to ensure student acquisition of clinical skills required for professional practice. Newly included standards address the need for institutions and programs to adequately prepare educators, administrators and students for the inclusion of distance education technologies. Standards also require schools to carefully evaluate the impact of employing distance education technologies on the overall program.

**Doctoral standards:** ACHENA's 2012 Doctoral Subcommittee reviewed, edited, and expanded work that had been begun by an earlier ACHENA committee. The 2012 subcommittee members met on a monthly basis for 6 months to prepare draft standards that were presented to the entire commission during the December 2012 meeting. The committee deliberated upon the similarities and differences between the Master's level and Doctoral level standards. Standards for skills and competencies required in the doctoral programs were defined as being more advanced than the Master's level training, with regards to repertory, homeopathy study, and they included a medical dimension. The goal was to offer such a program that would put homeopathic medical doctors on par with the other medical doctors, employing the unique homeopathic philosophy and approach. Standards are proposed whereby a graduate from a Doctoral Program will be prepared to:

1. Serve as a primary care provider responsible for diagnosing medical conditions and employing the art and science of homeopathy to treat disease;
2. Advance homeopathic research; and
3. Serve in a leadership capacity in the medical community.

On an informal note, the work was enjoyable, stimulating, and brought a strong infusion of optimism about the growth of homeopathy in the US.

**“Standards for Homeopathic Education and Competencies for Homeopathic Practitioner in North America”:** In 2010, ACHENA worked with other national homeopathic organizations to sponsor a Summit in Toronto, Canada to review and update the “2001 Standards and Competencies for the Professional Practice of Homeopathy in North America”. The Summit provided a forum to review and vote on updates to the standards for homeopathic education and competencies for homeopathic practice. Between 2010 and early 2013, several committees were charged with incorporating comments from the Summit into the new document which was expanded and re-named as “Standards for Homeopathic Education and Competencies for Homeopathic Practitioner in North America”. In conjunction with the Homeopathic Action Alliance, ACHENA has initiated a Public Comment process to obtain comments from the larger homeopathic community and stakeholders in the general public. The public comment period began on April 2<sup>nd</sup> and will run through June 3<sup>rd</sup>. A committee of individuals established by the HAA will review and respond to all public comments by August 3<sup>rd</sup>. The “Standards for Homeopathic Education and Competencies for Homeopathic Practitioner in North America” is an important reference document that helps to inform, along with other sources, ACHENA's accreditation standards related to the Homeopathy Program of Study.