

For immediate release

Grass roots health care reform – community acupuncture offers an affordable health care alternative.

August 27, 2009, Escondido, California – According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), more than 43 million Americans are uninsured. Many more are under insured, having only basic coverage. Facing growing numbers of uninsured or under insured patients and dissatisfied with the corporate model of health care today which does not ensure universal access to care, Harmony Community Wellness Center is bringing community style acupuncture to Escondido.

Community acupuncture is a growing, grass roots movement that is changing the way health care is provided for many. Patients are treated in a quiet, comfortable community setting, where treatments can be provided to several people simultaneously. This allows for significant cost reduction, bringing treatment prices down as low as \$20 per treatment.

In America, acupuncture practices typically treat patients individually, in private rooms or cubicles. These private acupuncture treatments typically cost \$65 to \$150 per treatment. The promise of this ancient medicine, once easily accessible to everyone, has been priced out of reach of the average citizen. This cost structure also prevents most patients who do try acupuncture from getting the number of treatments they need to get well.

“Acupuncture works best when treatments are frequent and regular”, says Lars Nielsen, co-founder of Harmony Community Wellness Center. “Treatment effects are cumulative and we want patients to get better as soon as possible. We don’t want cost to be a barrier to your well being. That is why we’ve developed this community clinic. We have a sliding scale fee structure, from \$20 to \$40 per treatment. We tell patients to pay us what they can afford, it’s up to them.”

The National Institutes of Health (<http://nccam.nih.gov/>) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have both recognized acupuncture as effective in treating a wide range of conditions. While widely recognized as offering pain relief, acupuncture can

also be effective in treating such wide ranging conditions as: Headache, hypertension, depression, menstrual irregularities, digestion issues, eczema and many more.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “acupuncture analgesia works better than a placebo for most kinds of pain, and its effective rate in the treatment of chronic pain is comparable with that of morphine”. In order for acupuncture to be effective, an individual usually needs to commit to regular treatments. By lowering costs, Nielsen aspires to help people make that commitment to their health.

Nielsen stresses that this business model is sustainable for both patients and practitioners, and is not meant to compete with the existing acupuncture model. “We are here to offer an affordable alternative. Everyone deserves an opportunity to help themselves and acupuncture has proven a safe and effective way to do this.”

Harmony Community Wellness Center will be celebrating it’s grand opening September 5th through September 11th, 2009, by offering free treatments to all first time patients. “We want people to experience what community acupuncture is all about and a free treatment gives everyone the opportunity,” says Lars Nielsen.

Harmony Community Wellness Center (HCWC) was founded by a husband and wife team, Lars Nielsen, L.Ac., Dipl O.M., and Maki Tanaka Nielsen, L.Ac., Dipl. Ac., with the mission to provide affordable care for the health of our community. We believe that acupuncture is a great, low cost alternative modality that can help many achieve wellness. HCWC also provides massage and a number of wellness classes, including yoga, tai chi and qigong. Additional information is found on our web site at <http://www.hcwcenter.com>.

The US-based Community Acupuncture Network is a non-profit organization of practitioners, patients, and supporters whose goal is to instruct and advocate for more affordable and accessible acupuncture by promoting the practice of offering treatments in community settings for a sliding scale ranging within \$15-40 a treatment. (www.communityacupuncturenetwork.org)

Additional links:

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/hinsure.htm>

<http://nccam.nih.gov/health/acupuncture/introduction.htm>

http://marketplace.publicradio.org/display/web/2008/09/02/community_acupuncture/

<http://www.itmonline.org/arts/restructure.htm>

<http://www.acupuncturetoday.com/mpacms/at/article.php?id=30335>

http://www.nih.gov/news/research_matters/may2009/05182009backpain.htm

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