

# Welcome to The Community Acupuncture Project of Columbia City - Affordable Healthcare for All

## **What is different about our clinic?**

We treat in a community setting

Most US acupuncturists treat patients on tables in individual cubicles.

This is not traditional in Asia, where acupuncture usually occurs in a community setting. In our clinic we primarily use recliners in a quiet, soothing space.

Treating patients in a community setting has many benefits including:

It's easy for friends and family members to receive treatment together and many find it comforting as the collective energetic field (group chi) nurtures the entire group.

In some styles of acupuncture, the needles are removed after only a few minutes or after a half hour at most. The style of acupuncture practiced at the Hope Acupuncture Project allows you to receive treatment for as long as you want. Most people learn to sense when the treatment is "done" - This can vary from 20 minutes to an hour.

Many people fall asleep and wake feeling refreshed.

We have a sliding scale

Most US acupuncturists see one or two patients per hour and charge between \$65 up to \$175 per treatment. They tend to spend a long time talking with each patient, going over medical records, asking many questions. We don't - and this is a very important difference. In order to make acupuncture affordable for you and still make a living, we streamline our treatments and see multiple patients per hour. Instead of asking lots of questions, we rely on our diagnostic skills to treat you. This is exactly how acupuncture is traditionally practiced in Asia -- many patients per hour and very little talking. High quality acupuncture in a community atmosphere at affordable rates (\$15 minimum) – that's the essence of our community clinic and represents a growing movement in the U.S. called 'working class acupuncture.' To read more about this, please go to the website [www.workingclassacupuncture.org](http://www.workingclassacupuncture.org)

We practice a blend of acupuncture styles, mostly relying upon "distal" points in the hands, feet and head to treat problems anywhere in the body.

Research in the United States (as well as thousands of years of tradition in Asia) has shown that acupuncture is most effective when it is done frequently and regularly – once a week is usually the minimum required to make progress on any kind of health issue, and unfortunately, usually all people can afford. The purpose of our sliding scale

is to separate the issues of money and treatment; we want you to come in often enough to really get better and stay better!

### **Our Sliding Scale**

We work on an honor system.

Everyone is required to pay an initial registration and paperwork fee of \$10, and then you will decide the cost of each treatment according to what you can comfortably afford. Below is a guide that we have found to be fair.

Under \$20,000	- \$15 per treatment + \$10 for repeat treatments within same week.
\$20,000 - \$25,000	- \$20 per treatment + \$10 for repeat treatments within same week.
\$25,000 - \$30,000	- \$25 per treatment + \$15 for repeat treatments within same week.
\$30,000 - \$40,000	- \$30 per treatment + \$15 for repeat treatments within same week.
\$40,000 - \$50,000	- \$40 per treatment + \$20 for repeat treatments within same week.
\$50,000+	- \$45 per treatment + \$25 for repeat treatments within same week.

Please note - because we have a sliding scale, we cannot do insurance billing (that's the insurance companies' rule). If you would like a receipt from us to submit to your insurance company, please let us know.

The Community Acupuncture Project does not receive grants, state or federal money or insurance reimbursement. We exist solely because patients pay for their treatments – it is a sustainable community business model.

### **What We Need From You**

#### ◆ Medical Responsibility

The Community Acupuncture Project does not provide primary care medicine! Acupuncture is an excellent complement to Western medicine, but it is not a substitute for it. If you have, or think you may have a potentially serious condition such as an infection, unexplained weight loss or gain, heart conditions, suspected fracture or dislocation, severe abdominal pain, respiratory distress, serious bleeding, brain disorders, etc. you need to be under the care of a physician (ND, MD, or DO) for us to treat you in accordance with Washington state law. We can provide complimentary care for many of these conditions - for instance, acupuncture treats the side effects of chemotherapy very effectively, as well as being of great value in stroke rehabilitation. However, acupuncture is not primary care medicine.

#### ◆ Flexibility

The community setting requires some flexibility from you. For instance, many patients have a favorite recliner. When the clinic is busy, someone may be sitting in yours. Similarly, we may have a few patients who snore. Other patients who dislike snoring bring earplugs to their treatments. We are grateful for this! Some people even bring a pillow or blanket from home, because they prefer theirs to ours. That's fine with us. Basically, we need you to make yourself comfortable in the community room before we arrive to treat you. Let us know at the beginning of the treatment, if you need to be somewhere at a certain time or if you want to be unpinned after a specific amount of time. We'll make sure you're out on time. In general, if you feel "done", open your eyes and give us a meaningful look -- if your eyes are closed, we'll think you're asleep and we won't wake you up.

#### ◆ Community-Mindedness

The soothing atmosphere in our clinic exists because all of our patients create it by relaxing together. We appreciate everyone's presence! Such collective stillness is rare and precious in our rushed society. Maintaining this feeling of calm requires that no one talk very much in the clinic space, and that they speak softly in the waiting area. If you would like to speak to a practitioner one-on-one at any length, please let us know. We may need to schedule a session separately and might need to do it by phone. When you walk through the treatment space, please respect people's healing and move slowly and quietly. We understand that you may have many questions about how acupuncture works, but unfortunately, we can't explain what every point does, or how the medicine works while we are treating you -- these are very large topics! We can, however point you in the direction of informative literature or websites that may answer your questions.

#### ◆ A little help running the clinic

Our mission is to serve as many people as we can in the community, however, our initial budget is small. Therefore, we may not always have a receptionist and we need your help so that the clinic runs smoothly:

Payment happens on the 'honor system'. Please pay for your treatment before entering the treatment space by inserting cash or check, with your name, into one of the envelopes provided and then inserting it into the box. We will be happy to write you a receipt upon request.

Please take all your belongings with you as you proceed through our space - we cannot be responsible for items left in the building.

PLEASE turn off your cell phone or pager on entering the building.

If you are able, please use our online scheduling system by going to our website. This service is easy to use and it frees up our time to give more acupuncture treatments. If you need to speak with one of us to schedule appointments and we are busy with

patients, please leave us a note with a list of times that work for you, or leave us a phone message.

If you would like to directly support our mission of bringing social justice to healthcare, please contact one of us regarding volunteer opportunities in our clinic. If we work together in our community, we believe we can truly heal the world.

#### ◆ Commitment

Acupuncture is a PROCESS. It is unrealistic to expect your problem to resolve after one treatment. In China, a typical treatment protocol for a chronic condition could be acupuncture every other day for three months! Most people don't require that much acupuncture, but virtually every patient requires a course of treatment, which can vary in length and frequency.

We are able to keep our prices so low, in part because of the extraordinary amount of marketing our patients do on our behalf - word of mouth will ensure that we won't need to spend money on advertising. We cannot express how grateful we are for this. Our patients are such effective marketers because they have first-hand experience of how well acupuncture works. All our satisfied patients basically made a commitment to a course of treatment.

On your first visit, your acupuncturist will suggest a course of treatment, which can be anything from "we'd like to see you once a week for six weeks" to "we'd really like to see you every day for the next four days". This treatment plan is based on our experience with treating different kinds of conditions. If you don't come in often enough or long enough, acupuncture will have limited success.

The purpose of our sliding scale is to help you make that commitment. If you have questions about how long it will take to see results, please ask us, or if you think you need to adjust your treatment plan, please let us know. We need you to commit to the process of treatment in order to get good results.

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of your healing process.