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If You Build It ...

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As acupuncture becomes integrated into the fabric of U.S. health care, opportunities for innovative partnerships with hospitals, outpatient clinics and rehabilitation centers are being developed. These creative programs promote increased access to acupuncture care and provide diverse examples of how treatment options can become meaningfully blended.

Acupuncture Today's "Acupuncture in the Public Health Setting" series on incorporating acupuncture into hospital practice has resulted in a heartening response from providers all over the country. Some of the acupuncturists who've contacted us have already been working in various medical settings, while others are in the process of designing programs. It has been impressive to read about the diversity of medical and health care models being created, and indicates the level of readiness to collaborate that other providers are demonstrating.

To address the many questions we receive, as well as to share some of what we have learned through our consulting practice, we will feature a bimonthly question-and-answer column. Please e-mail any questions related to business start up, the nonprofit sector, public health settings, hospital integration, and clinical or client issues to kporter@pathwaysboston.org and bsommers@pathwaysboston.org. Identifying information will not be used, and questions will receive a personal response. We look forward to hearing from you!

Q: I am a licensed acupuncturist in the U.S. interested in setting up a nonprofit clinic for children, with a focus on children with special needs. Do you think I could find adequate funding for something like this? I am just beginning the groundwork, and would appreciate any advice you could offer.

A: The first step in any innovation is inspiration - so kudos for your vision! Funding is often challenging to secure, but as acupuncturists, we love a challenge. In the meantime, create your baseline budget. If you plant your seeds well before you are called upon to sow the field, you may find you can start a pilot project with little more than some volunteer elbow grease.

In the area of children with special needs, start dialogues with parental support groups and agencies that offer services for children. Identifying your potential partners and collaborators is a crucial first step. Talk with them and assess the possibility of jointly working on a project. These partners may be able to offer you access to potential patients at minimum, but at maximum, they may be able to provide you with space to offer care at their agency. They may also provide the crucial referrals your project will need. If the agency is interested, enlist their grant writer in finding and writing a grant that would provide an acupuncture program for their population. They will know more than anyone where to find potential funders interested in their specific population.

If you haven't already offered acupuncture to this population, you may consider doing some free

consultations and/or treatments and presentations to build a pilot group you can cite when requesting funding support or collaborative partners in the project.

If you take the route to seek out grant funding yourself, and you have not written grants before, consider finding a local grant writer who could help you determine corporations and funders in your area that might be approached. Check your city library for grant makers information.

Spend a bit of planning time by researching documented efficacy on the conditions you plan to treat; this will be helpful in presenting background information and data when you approach agencies, potential collaborators and funders. The National Acupuncture Detoxification Association has done some work specifically treating kids with ADHD that may be useful for you.

Online resources that may be helpful:

- www.grassrootsfundraising.org
- <http://ga1.org/ct/N1zpzDn1hqWF/GRANT-GOV/>
- www.fdncenter.org
- www.acudetox.com

Q: I am an acupuncturist working part-time on call at a hospital in the rehabilitation department. Could you please tell me if you know of any specific hospitals in the U.S. using acupuncture for labor and delivery?

A: In the U.S., more often than not, inclusion of acupuncture comes from the woman in labor bringing in her own "support staff" which may include a doula, massage therapist, coach, and acupuncturist. Often, the acupuncturist is employed directly by the patient, is not on hospital staff, and engages in care almost as if he or she is a guest of the patient. Hospital staff often turn a blind eye on this, although if the practitioner is not credentialed through the hospital, it gives rise to major liability issues from the hospital's perspective. Medical acupuncturists, particularly nurse midwives and MDs who provide acupuncture, are often preferred in U.S. hospital settings for labor and delivery. Abington Memorial Hospital in Pennsylvania, for instance, offers acupuncture to patients before, during and after delivery by an on-staff physician acupuncturist.

Birth centers may be another type of institution to approach to offer support for labor and delivery; these centers are affiliated with hospitals but may be located off-site or in another part of the hospital in order to provide a more comfortable environment for low-risk deliveries. The essential networking is to do outreach to the staff of the obstetrics units and identify potential allies. Having these allies in place can help smooth the hospital's transition to offering acupuncture care. As with other services, do your homework and check the research literature for articles on how acupuncture may be useful in safely providing support during labor and delivery.

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