



BILLING / FEES / INSURANCE

AWB Floods Iowa With Support

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When areas of Iowa and the Midwest experienced severe flooding in 2008, those of us at Acupuncturists Without Borders (AWB) were hearing stories like this: "Our city and community has been struck by tragedy and destruction. We each carry the dampness of the past week in our lungs and in our hearts. So much has darkened the skies of our community: evacuations, losses of property ... uncertainty, disruption and fear. And we have also seen great generosity and compassion." (Rabbi Sherman, Temple Judah, Iowa)

AWB staff began to mobilize under Kirk Moulton's leadership, Kirk is an AWB volunteer from Chicago who had attended our training and had also started a veterans clinic. Kirk was able to secure locations treating survivors at the Johnson County Fairgrounds Red Cross shelter in Iowa City, and the Prairie High School Red Cross Shelter in Cedar Rapids. This was the first time AWB was allowed to treat inside Red Cross shelters. In the past, we had been asked to do treatments outside.

Susan Reed, LAc, joined Kirk, and they quickly set up a mini-training. Ten Iowa practitioners out of a total of 54 practitioners in the state attended. Nine of those 10 acupuncturists then signed up as field volunteers.

In addition to the Red Cross shelters, we treated people at the Westdale Mall (Disaster Relief Center) alongside the Tzu Chi Buddhist Charitable Organization, with whom we developed a great relationship and hope to pursue further collaboration. We also treated people at the July 4th fairgrounds.

AWB did not have any money in hand to pay for this effort. However, we were able to raise a few thousand dollars to pay for a small portion of the costs, and we secured needle donations from Lhasa OMS. We have set up a Disaster Ready Fund so that we will be in a better position to respond immediately with funds in hand when disasters arise.



The power of community acupuncture was witnessed over and over. The power of doing field work together as a community of acupuncturists was also embracing, fun and transformative. Reed described one of the clients:

"Like many of the people who come from upstairs, she is carrying her Tzu Chi blanket, clutching it to her. She sits down and can barely sit still for the needling process, but she manages it, and the needles do their magic almost immediately. She leans her head back against the wall, her eyes close, and she is gone from her worries for a little while. Her blanket is draped across her arms and she is resting deeply, now unmoving. These are a few minutes of grace. It is very affecting to see how she responds; many people notice."

AWB launched a major effort during this time to try to get permission to bring in out-of-state practitioners. We simply didn't have enough Iowa practitioners, and many of them were busy with their own practices or were dealing with the disaster themselves.

We made contact with FEMA, Homeland Security, the Iowa Medical Board, the Iowa Public Health Department, the Iowa Governor's office and the State Attorney General's office. We even had a *pro bono* local attorney working with us. In the end, we were told: "At this time, no requests or needs have been identified across the state of Iowa that match with the services you have so kindly offered."



This is why we want to strongly encourage acupuncturists to mobilize in their communities and states so when a disaster hits, they are ready, with the appropriate permissions in place. AWB can help you to organize an effort. Please contact us at info@acuwithoutborders.org. We found, as we have in every field effort, that if we had garnered the permission to bring in out-of-state practitioners, we would have had a much larger and more successful program.

Our huge thanks goes out to all who contributed to this effort in so many ways.

Acupuncturists Without Borders is offering a PDA/CEU qualified comprehensive weekend training in Orlando Feb. 28 - March 1, as well as in other locations around the country throughout 2009. The trainings are called "Healing Community Trauma: How to Do Mobile Group Acupuncture for Traumatic Events."

For general information on Acupuncturists Without Borders, please visit www.acuwithoutborders.org. For more information on trainings, please visit our Web site or call (505) 266-3878.

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