

ACUPUNCTURE *from page 1A*

Every Wednesday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., she offers acupuncture treatments to the community free of charge — but she requests a donation be made for those financially unable to make one. So far, the clinic has provided almost 5,000 treatments since the program began.

“We really saw a need to start this community acupuncture program. As we move into the 21st century, there’s just so much stress. There’s political stress, there’s environmental stress, there’s financial stress for people,” Patricia said. “This is just a wonderful way to help people manage that stress.”

During the clinic, visitors sit in a dimly lit room surrounded by soothing sounds of running water from indoor fountains, and meditative music floats in the background. Patricia moves around the room on a rolling stool with a caddy for her acupuncture supplies, and volunteers Carol Carpenter, Donna Graves and Marilyn Hansen help with anything her or the patients may need.

The treatment visitors receive is called a five-needle protocol. Five hair-thin acupuncture needles are inserted in each ear, which can offer vast benefits, according to Patricia.

“It does a lot of different things for people,” she said. “It brings their central nervous system into balance so they feel less stressed, so they can make clearer decisions and just feel better in their body. It also helps promote healthy sleep and overall health and vitality. It enhances mental clarity and it helps people deal with pain and anxiety, and that ripples out in their family, their work, their community and beyond.”

During the treatment, the acupuncture needles are left in patients’ ears for 20 to 30 minutes. Patricia says she sees about 35 to 40 people during that two-hour period and about 20 percent of visitors are new to the clinic.

“We tried to span the lunch hours because sometimes people who are working 8 to 5 can have a hard time getting self-care treatments, so I think this is a really nice way that they can come in on a lunch hour and get a treatment and still have time to get a bite to eat,” she said.

Acupuncture originated in ancient China and is just one branch of traditional Chinese medicine. The World Health Organization (WHO) endorses acupuncture as a proven, effective treatment

for many symptoms such as low back and neck pain, headaches, nausea and symptoms of depression. When performed by a certified acupuncturist following FDA regulations requiring that acupuncture needles be single-use only, acupuncture is a very safe and effective treatment, according to WHO.

“This five-needle protocol, this ear treatment, is used in disaster relief, human inflicted trauma, or with what we see in PTSD,” Patricia said. “It’s a very effective treatment because we know now that when you place these needles in the ear, it literally reroutes the blood flow from the alarm system of the brain, which is called the amygdala, to the frontal cortex. So it helps people think more clearly and help them be less reactive to their triggers related to trauma.”

In 2017, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) declared a public health emergency because of the widespread misuse of opioid medications. Opioids, a class of drugs found naturally in the opium poppy plant, are often used in pain relief medication; however, opioids are highly addictive and, according to the HHS, more than 130 people die every day in the United States from opioid-related drug overdoses.

Acupuncture gives physicians a non-pharmacological option to offer their patients.

“Now with the opioid crisis in full bloom, it is a mandate that hospitals have other, non-pharmacological options to offer patients to deal with pain,” Patricia said. “We fit that niche. And it gives the primary care providers a referral that is not expensive for the patient that really helps them manage their pain, and can help them come off of pain medications that they no longer want to be on.”

Points of Grace Community Acupuncture program has partnered with PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center for the past three years to serve as a non-pharmacological recommendation for patients seeking alternative ways of managing pain or stress.

“Peace Harbor has committed to reducing opioid dependence in our community through education and by providing alternatives for pain management, and acupuncture is a proven effective option for some patients,” said Susan Blane, PeaceHealth’s community health director.

According to Blane, PeaceHealth is growing its toolbox

for maximum pain management while minimizing the need for prescription opioids, and Wellspring offers beneficial alternatives.

“Wellspring’s alignment with the PeaceHealth mission of promoting personal and community health, and Patricia’s compassion and caring for her patients and for the community, makes this a very effective and beneficial partnership,” Blane said.

Dr. Anthony Dodson from Peace Harbor says acupuncture may not help every patient, but for those it can, it’s very beneficial.

“It’s interesting that some of the patients that benefit the most from this community acupuncture program we don’t see because they don’t need to come in and talk to us,” Dr. Dodson said. “With this whole opioid epidemic, the group that’s sort of forgotten is the people who have managed to do the right thing and manage their pain on their own.”

According to Patricia, she sees acupuncture as an addition to the care primary physicians offer patients. Acupuncture does not take the place of seeing a primary care doctor, but rather can serve as an enhancing, additional treatment for patients.

“We have conventional medicine which is really powerful and really wonderful. It’s great for intervention, medications, surgery and physical therapy — and then there’s just this whole other realm of care that empowers people in their own care,” Patricia said. “It gives people options on their own self-care. Not choosing one or the other, but really working to integrate the two. And that really has been a theme in Wellspring clinic. We are working with physicians and encouraging people to see their primary care provider — to take the best of both worlds and what works for them to really captain their own healthcare ship.”

Dodson said he has no doubt that trying as many different options for his patients with their pain, aside from resorting to opioids, is beneficial.

“I have a few patients that see Patricia and don’t use any pain medication. Sometimes it’s hard to talk patients into going to yoga for lower back pain or acupuncture, but the ones that do benefit,” he said. “This program is something that was never there before and the more available it gets, the more part of a regular health-care plan it becomes, and the more patients benefit!”

Acupuncture has been

shown to increase the release of endorphins, the chemical in the body often referred to as the ‘feel-good hormone.’ Endorphins actually work similarly to opioids in that they relieve pain and produce feelings of euphoria, which can help with stress and mental health overall.

The difference is that acupuncture does not come with potentially deadly side effects that research says opioids do.

“The idea is just to help people feel as good as they can and function as well as they can,” Patricia said.

A variety of things that acupuncture has helped individuals with has been surprising, too, she added, including, “Sinus conditions, allergies. I’ve had people come in and it helps with their asthma. It helps with their immune function. It’s really far reaching.”

With a background in public health, Patricia sees acupuncture as a

wide-reaching source of treatment for many symptoms.

“It’s low tech, it’s so safe and so effective. It doesn’t generate a lot of waste. We can serve a lot of people for very little money for a very huge public health benefit and I love that,” she said.

From a public health perspective, treatments should be affordable for everybody, according to Patricia — meaning treatments don’t cost a lot to administer or to receive them.

“That affordability has two sides to it and acupuncture just ticks off all those boxes,” she added. “I’m just in awe of how this ancient medicine is so timeless and makes such a contribution



COURTESY PHOTO

This patient receives Patricia Immel’s five-needle protocol for pain and stress relief.

to us today in the 21st century.”

The Wellspring Clinic is located at 1845 Highway 126 Suite H in Florence, Ore. For more information on the community acupuncture program, visit thewellspringclinic.com/points-of-grace.

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Siuslaw News

garage sale GUIDE

Fri.-Sat., 8/16-8/17
9am-?

4866 Cloudcroft Road
4-friends + a collection of antiques, furniture, crafts, kitchen, yard + misc.
Rain? See You Next Week.

Huge Multi-Family Sale
Fri.-Sat., 8/16-8/17
9am-4pm
1650 Pine Court.

Moving/Garage Sale
One Day Only!
Sat., 8/17
8am-4pm
5519 Chittum Loop.

Moving Sale
Sat., 8/17 only
8am-Noon
15 Park Village Drive
Everything must go!

Sat., 8/17 only
9am-3pm
87921 Star View Drive
Cookware, linens tools, books. Too much to list!
No Early Birds Please!

Massive Yard Sale at the Sand Ranch
Fri.-Sat., 8/16-8/17
8am-5pm
Sunday 8/18
9am-2pm
5351 Highway 101
Lots of tools, antiques, furniture & tools, Retail Display Cabinets. Tons of Lapidary rock equipment, Contractor tools & supplies. Everything Must Go!!

Fri.-Sat., 8/16-8/17
9am-2pm
2360 Willow Loop
Man Cave - Shop tools, garden tools & household items.

HUGE ESTATE SALE
August 16, 17, 18
9am to 3pm
1335 Mulberry Ln. off of West 15th St.
The Estate of Albert Schurr over 20 years of accumulation, many dressers & desks, couches, chairs, double bed, dining room table with chairs, cabinets, book shelves, carved liquor cabinet, nesting table, coffee table, 50+ cameras, over 1,000 vinyl records, radios, speakers, record players, reel to reel, DVD & VHS player, slide projector, Avon collection, exercise equipment, vintage cookware set, dish sets, lots of kitchen items, linen, picture frames, luggage, oriental décor, unique Knick knacks, 20 sets of golf clubs & balls, golfing memorabilia, vintage insulators, loads of hand & power tools, camping gear & much, much more. Visit facebook and Craigslist for more items.
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9am to 3pm
An exceptional estate of retired professor and lifelong collector of Hopi, Navajo, Judaica, Peruvian and Persian textiles and artwork. Large selection of collector books. Mid-century furniture, stained glass, Gauguin & O’Keeffe giclees. This estate is located in gated community of Florentine Estates - address cannot be posted. Enter through Munsel Lake Rd. gates and follow traffic directions. Park only on sidewalk side of streets, do not block driveways. ALL SALES FINAL. Credit cards accepted. View photos at CindyWobbeEstates.com.



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