

The needles have it

By LARA MOSSA
Of The Oakland Press

A growing acceptance of alternative medicine has helped Acupuncture Healthcare Associates of Michigan double in size.

Now serving 100 patients a week, the 7-year-old business has renovated and expanded its office, owner Julie Silver said.

"What I believe is that acupuncture can move people forward in their healing," she said.

Silver started the business from scratch, leasing space from a physician and networking to build a client base. In 2001, she opened a 700-square-foot office and last year added a second acupuncturist, Monica Klemmer.

With two acupuncturists on staff, the business still had a monthlong waiting list, she said, so she decided to expand. Silver leased the vacant space next to hers, knocked down the walls and renovated the 1,400-square-foot suite.

She also added a massage therapist and naturopathic physician to expand the scope of services.

"I thought it would complement the work that we do and (allow us) to treat the whole body," she said.

The naturopathic physician, Jen Green, is trained in holistic medicine, which is a method of treatment that relies more on natural remedies than traditional medicine. Along with the use of vitamins and herbs, treatments usually involve changes in a person's diet, exercise or lifestyle.

A 2,000-year-old Chinese practice, acupuncture involves inserting fine needles through the skin at specific points to cure disease or relieve pain.

Acupuncture can be used to treat the whole body, Silver said. While her practice specializes in women's health, fertility and pain management, common conditions treated through acupuncture include sinus problems, allergies, digestive problems, autoimmune diseases and side effects from chemotherapy.

An initial consultation is \$130 and includes treatment. Follow-up visits cost \$75-\$85. Typically, health insurance does not cover services but some patients may pay for services from their health savings accounts. Many of her patients are

**WEST BLOOMFIELD
TWP.**



The business

Name: Acupuncture Healthcare Associates of Michigan

Business: acupuncture and other services

Owner: Julie Silver

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Web site: www.acupunctureinmichigan.com

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Hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday, 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Friday and 8 a.m. to noon Saturday

referred by physicians, she added.

Heather Bierlein, 30, of Lyon Township began receiving acupuncture for neck pain about five months ago. Having suffered from pain since a car accident when she was 16 years old, she has tried

Oakland Press photos/JOSE JUAREZ

Heather Bierlein of Lyon Township receives acupuncture from Julie Silver in West Bloomfield Township. Above left, her foot is treated.

painkillers, chiropractic treatments and massage, she said.

Skeptical at first, Bierlein now receives services every three to four weeks.

"It has proven to be quite useful, quite relaxing," she said. "I still occasionally have my medicine but it has taken away the majority of the pain."

Formerly a saleswoman, Silver became interested in acupuncture because she received treatments herself. She would go to an acupuncturist before her doctor, she recalled.

Silver, 47, of Royal Oak, received training in acupuncture from the Midwest College of Oriental Medicine in Chicago.

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