

Commerce Corner

By Linda Rodriguez
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Pathways clearing a path to low cost health care

Pathways to Wellness, the groundbreaking nonprofit healthcare organization that specializes in alternative therapies, has recently announced that it has started another innovative program to help break down the cost barrier that prevents many people from accessing alternative care. Pathways, emulating a West Coast model, is offering \$35 acupuncture session given in small group settings on Saturday mornings, in an effort to make oftentimes costly acupuncture (\$70 to \$125 in the Boston area) affordable and accessible to working people who need it.

“Pathways is a non-profit organization, so we are committed to finding new ways to overcome barriers to care. We know that cost is often the primary reason that prevents more people from accessing acupuncture, or it keeps people from coming in often enough to get better and stay better. Most health insurance providers don’t cover acupuncture. So, we see this new program as a way to provide an affordable and accessible health care option,” Kristen Porter, executive director at Pathways to Wellness, said in a press release announcing the new program.

Pathways to Wellness was born more than 16 years ago, after a concerned group of volunteer acupuncturists wanted to respond to the growing AIDS crisis among South End gay men and

saw that a way to do that was through low-cost acupuncture. The program soon expanded to include other forms of alternative therapy, including Chinese herbal medicine, yoga, craniosacral massage, and shiatsu massage, and now, Pathways is the nation’s largest wellness center of its kind and the only nonprofit one in the area. While the organization has also expanded its focus from individuals living with HIV/AIDS, the emphasis remains on treating other individuals dealing with chronic pain or diseases, especially those also using Western medicine to treat their illnesses.

Additionally, Pathways’ “Share the Care” payment plan ensures that low-cost or free complimentary medical care is available to anyone who needs it: When people pay full price for their services, that money goes back into the center, and helps others who cannot pay full price get care.

Located at 142 Berkeley Street, on the second floor above the Mitchell Gold Showroom, Pathways to Wellness can be reached at 617.859.3036 or at www.pathwaysboston.org.