

The Nonprofit Sector

By Linda Rodriguez
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East meets West

Pathways to Wellness, local holistic and alternative therapies provider, has started out the new year with a new home, thanks to a strategic partnership with the South End Community Health Center. Pathways, which had been located at 142 Berkeley St. and has been a part of the South End and Back Bay for nearly 17 years, has moved into a new clinical space at South End Community Health Center's 1601 Washington St. location. The new center opened on Wednesday.

"The partnership between Pathways and South End [Community Health] will bring to life some new programs targeted towards specialized populations," explained Kristen Porter, executive director of Pathways, noting that one of those will be a pediatric program. "Although we've treated children, it hasn't been a primary specialty. That is one of the big changes that is really exciting to all of us in this transition."

Pathways to Wellness began in 1989, when a group of concerned volunteer acupuncturists wanted to respond to the growing AIDS crisis among South End gay men, opening the first care center on Clarendon Street. Since then, the organization has grown, expanding its care to include everyone who needs it and its therapies to include Chinese herbal medicine, shiatsu massage, craniosacral massage therapy, yoga classes, group wellness sessions, and non-needle acupuncture. Additionally, Pathways is the only holistic therapy center in the state to employ the "Share

the Care" payment scale, allowing the center to offer low-cost or free holistic therapy to those who need it, bolstered by the full-price payments paid by those who can afford it.

Similarly, the South End Community Health Center has worked since 1969 to make healthcare accessible to individuals in the South End, Lower Roxbury and beyond, and has carved out an important niche as a full-service medical, dental and mental-health facility. The Center serves a highly diverse population, including more than 1000 homeless patients.

A partnership between Pathways and South End Community Health has been in the works since Oct. 2005 and brings together two nonprofit public health community resources under one roof, allowing, Porter said, both organizations to expand their offerings and to offer a greater range of care to their clients. "We're constantly developing new programs," said Porter. "The synergy between the two organizations will really facilitate growth in that area. The strategic alliance is maintaining both organization's independence, so we are still our own 501(c) 3 nonprofit corporation, but I think that the opportunity to really have integrated care and one-stop shopping has become more important to patients."

Calling the partnership a "truly integrative approach," Porter said that partnership will see "Western, allopathic practitioners and holistic practitioners in the same space, developing programs together, caring for patients together, and ultimately, giving better care to the patients."