



**Y**ou finish up your workout at the Columbus Athletic Club. Sweaty and a bit sore, you turn the corner and head to your neighborhood wellness center. Whether you know it or not, you fall into the hands of one of the area's most reputable and sought-after holistic health practitioners. An hour later, you emerge rejuvenated and harmonized, having spent less than you would have dropped on a night's drinks at Club Cafe ... and feeling a heck of a lot better.

Sixty dollars for an hour-long shiatsu session. Acupuncture treatments for as little as \$15. Sounds a bit like a dream, doesn't it? Miraculously, it's one that too few people have yet to realize, simply because they've remained in the dark for more than a decade. Well, it's time to wake up.

For 15 years, Pathways to Wellness has been a leader in the world of holistic healthcare, not only because of its top-rate services, but because of its unique "Share the Care" model, which allows paying customers to provide for low-cost or free treatments for income-eligible clients, according to executive director Kristen Porter. But, as a non-profit organization with little to no advertising dollars, Pathways has had difficulty spreading the word about its award-winning services.

## A HIDDEN HOLISTIC GEM IN THE SOUTH END

with an emphasis on GLBT care. Early in 2004, they moved from the Clarendon Street YWCA to their current South End location at 142 Berkeley Street.

Pathways offers everything from yoga classes to Japanese meridian acupuncture to Chinese herbal treatments, all at rates that would make nearby gougers at Back Bay spas and salons blush. One-hour acupuncture treatments run as little as \$65, while Chinese herb consultations are \$40. Drop-in yoga classes are offered for \$12 a class, or \$10 on a prepaid basis. Though these prices are enticing enough, Porter says the prospect of paying for a less fortunate person's treatment should also add to the allure of Pathways to Wellness. For every standard rate payment, income-eligible clients receive discounted or free services, with one-hour acupuncture treatments available for as little as \$15 through the center's supervised intern clinic.

"Most people do not know about the services," says Porter, who began as a volunteer at the center and was quickly inspired to pursue coursework to become a master acupuncturist.

Founded in 1989 by a group of volunteer acupuncturists, the center once served primarily to treat the HIV+ community. However, their success led them five years ago to change their service model to offer treatments to the community at large,

Acupuncture is by far the most popular treatment at the center, Porter explains, with the technique being used to treat everything from infertility in lesbians to helping with hormone balancing in transsexuals. For the needle-phobic, Pathways' diverse board of professionals is able to offer Japanese-style acupuncture, using tools such as magnets or herbs. The center also offers a rare form of massage known as Craniosacral Therapy, whereby the bones of the skull are gently manipulated to help cure sinus infections, headaches and migraines. For those trying to kick the habit, Pathways offers a unique smoking cessation program that incorporates everything from acupuncture to aromatherapy to herbal cigarettes.

"One of the great things about holistic service is you're also treating emotional health and general well-being, not just the physical," says Porter, who notes that holistic healthcare is excellent preventative medicine to keep people balanced, even when the body feels well.

Porter adds, "It is my hope that the more that people know about the wonderful work of Pathways in the community, as well as the benefits [of holistic healthcare],

that we will begin to have more and more clients choosing to use Pathways so that we can share the care."

by Jeannie Greeley

Learn more about Pathways to Wellness at [www.pathwaysboston.org](http://www.pathwaysboston.org), or call 617.859.3036. Tax-deductible donations also accepted.

### Sticking It to the Competition: Acupuncture Rates Compared

#### Exhale

\$150/hour; \$100/half hour  
28 Arlington Street, Back Bay  
617.532.7000

#### The Boston Bodyworker

\$75-\$95/treatment  
607 Boylston St., Back Bay  
617.778.7344

#### Splash at the Sports Club/LA

\$150/80 minutes; \$100/50 minutes  
4 Avery St., Boston  
617.375.8200

#### Wellspace

\$70-\$85/hour  
160 Alewife Brook Parkway,  
Cambridge  
617.876.2660

#### Etant

\$100/hour  
524 Tremont St, South End  
617.423.5040

#### Pathways to Wellness

\$15-\$65/hour  
142 Berkeley St., South End  
617.859.3036

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