



Integrated Medicine

Acupuncture Physician
Joseph Williams takes
an integrative approach

story / J. CHAPIN

With our country facing an unprecedented healthcare crisis, costs beyond control and chronic illness at an all time high, a new vision of care is emerging—Integrative Medicine. The integrative medicine model is a patient-centered practice that focuses on the health of the whole person, their lifestyle and environment, not just the disease. Improved outcomes are made possible by listening to the patient's health concerns and symptoms, educating patients on their options and empowering patients in their own wellness and care..

It's all about the Patient

With more than one third of Adult Americans reported to use some form of complementary medicine, integrative medicine seeks to build a bridge between the conventional and complementary practices to offer the most comprehensive care focused on the patient. "It's all about a team-based care model with the patient as quarterback," states Joseph Williams, Acupuncture Physician, D.O.M. and owner of Sunshine Integrative Health located in Gainesville.

So what did this team approach look like for a 38 year-old mother, pregnant with her third child and faced with pregnancy induced hypertension? Driven to bed rest at 26 weeks and hoping to make it to 32 weeks, she sought out acupuncture since it has shown effectiveness in the treatment of high blood pressure. With weekly reports back to her OB-GYN, she was able to track the significant reduction in her blood pressure immediately after treatments and up until her next visit. Making it all the way to 38 weeks and well past the original goal of 32 weeks, when she was finally induced and gave birth to a beautiful baby girl.

The Proof is in the Evidence

A guiding principle for proponents of Integrative Medicine is the use of evidence-based, effective and safe therapies. Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine is a medical system that has been used to diagnose, treat and prevent illness for over 2,000 years. It is proven to remedy acute and chronic ailments, relieve pain, enhance recuperative powers, and strengthen the immune system. Modern research and international health organizations agree that acupuncture is a safe and highly effective treatment for many conditions and is a useful complement to conventional medicine. The World Health Organization recognizes acupuncture and Oriental medicine as effective for over 43 common ailments.

Athletes use Oriental medicine to achieve optimal performance levels. The National Cancer Institute cites numerous studies on acupuncture and its effectiveness in four cancer-related areas: enhancing immune function, decreasing pain, alleviating chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, and reducing other cancer treatment side effects. Auricular acupuncture has been proven to help those with chemical and/or substance dependency problems and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Integrative Medicine on Campus

The Consortium of Academic Health Centers for Integrative Medicine boasts a membership today of 45 highly esteemed academic medical centers, from Duke Integrative Medicine to the University of Maryland's Center for Integrative Medicine and Harvard Medical School. The

Consortium's vision, as stated on their website, is very clear and on point "A comprehensive and compassionate health care system offering seamless integration of effective complementary and conventional approaches to promote healing and health in every individual and community."

Driven by his passion to integrate medicine in Gainesville, Williams personally visited the University of Maryland's program. "I know experience is a critical part of the equation so for the last 2 years I have spent vacation time traveling to visit successful programs including the University of Maryland and the Sari Asher Center for Integrative Cancer Care, an initiative of the Palm Beach Cancer Institute Foundation."

Joseph Williams also takes his education very seriously. Holding two degrees, a bachelor's in health sciences and a master's in Oriental medicine from the Atlantic Institute of Oriental Medicine, 1 of only 16 Colleges residing outside of California that are certified by the state of California. Williams is a licensed Acupuncture Physician in Florida and a nationally board-certified Diplomate in Oriental Medicine by the National Commission for the Certification of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine.

Bridging the Gap

Given the complexity of medicine, patient demand and the increasing need for preventative care and wellness, integrative medicine is at the tipping point of mainstream medicine. With organizations like Acupuncturists Without Borders—where Williams not only trained in Field and Trauma Care but visited Haiti to treat the citizens

affected by the earthquake disaster—to the advanced certification program from Memorial Sloan Kettering for 'Acupuncture for the Cancer Patient' and internationally recognized associations like the Society of Integrative Oncology, it is critical that complementary medicine is delivered by trained practitioners.

As noted in the Integrative Oncology Practice Guidelines from the Society of Integrative Oncology, "even though people with cancer typically use complementary medicines along with conventional treatment, 38 to 60% of patients with cancer are taking complementary medicines without informing any member of their health care team." With alarming statistics like these, communication is a critical aspect of the integrative medicine model. The philosophy of Joseph Williams and Sunshine Integrative Health is to help patients bridge that gap. "I personally seek out other physicians to help coordinate care," states Williams. "The days of one patient, one practitioner and one protocol are thankfully behind us."

To reach Joseph Williams directly, please call 352-665-1090 or visit www.sunshineih.com located in the Seagle Building, 408 West University Avenue, Suite 503. Sunshine Integrative Health is also a proud sponsor of the American Cancer Society's Making Strides Against Breast Cancer in North Central Florida.

Appointments are intentionally scheduled to maximize the time with each patient without the inconvenience of long hours spent in waiting rooms. Do expect a comprehensive review of your past and current health and a plan to care for your immediate health needs and long-term goals.



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