



The art of acupuncture

A Better Body And Mind

Healthcare associates share a love for promoting wellness.

Lynne Meredith Schreiber
Special to the Jewish News

In her wildest career dreams, Julie Silver never imagined she'd be poking the members of Bon Jovi — with acupuncture needles.

But the managing partner and owner of Acupuncture Healthcare Associates of Michigan did exactly that before the band's recent Detroit concert — which shows just how far Silver and her dynam-

ic practice have come since she created the firm 11 years ago.

"In this business, I am truly making a difference in people's lives," says Silver, who made a dramatic career change from healthcare sales and marketing to acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine. "These ancient methods are not only helpful for specific ailments — they're a great recipe for ongoing good health, stress reduction and overall wellness."

While selling healthcare products in Chicago to nursing homes and other institutions, Silver was devastated to see "how compromised the care was. It seemed so helpless and impersonal."

For her own health, Silver had done acupuncture by a practitioner who had a medical degree, but expressly practiced the ancient treatment.

"When anything worried me, I went to him instead of to the doctor," she says, admitting that the two treatment modes are compatible. "I was already doing some soul-searching. And then I went on a wilderness trip alone in northern Canada — and I just knew I had to get out of what I was doing."

Getting Going

In 1997, Silver enrolled in a three-year program at the Midwest College of Oriental Medicine in Chicago. When she graduated, she decided to return to Michigan to start a practice near family.

"I knew it was a great business opportunity to move back to Michigan," she says. "There are not a lot of acupuncture practices here."

"One of the mandates of our practice is to educate the public about the many ways acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) can enhance wellness and create healing and we get an opportunity to do that every single day."

Acupuncture and TCM comprise a comprehensive healthcare tradition dating back nearly 3,000 years. Today, one-quarter of the world's people make use of this system. Acupuncture and TCM treat a range of conditions, from the common cold to infertility.

A 2007 survey revealed that 3.2 million Americans have undergone acupuncture in the year prior — up from 2.1 million in 2001. The most common uses, according to the government's National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, are chronic pain (arthritis, low back pain and headaches), fatigue, anxiety and digestive problems.

Studies have shown evidence of acupuncture's positive effects on many conditions, including infertility, addiction and reduction of nausea and fatigue caused by chemotherapy.

Her first year in business, Silver worked out of a doctor's office and "met with anyone who would talk to me." She also met potential patients at health fairs, Whole Foods Market, Nutri Foods and other local spots. After a year, she was so busy she decided to lease space on Orchard Lake Road, north of 14 Mile, where the practice is located today — albeit in double the space.

Growing Staff

Soon after, Silver hired Monica Mae Leibson, who is 30 and "a very soulful person," says Silver. Leibson is married to Joe Leibson, is the mother of 9-month-old Vera and lives in Plymouth.

Julie Shindler-Cohen, 27, came on board last summer to make a team of three acupuncturists; Dr. Jen Green, a naturopathic physician, rounds out the practice.

Local TV celebrity Lila Lazarus has been a patient of the practice for years. She swears by the ancient method for treating all manner of ailments.

"Who knew that being poked with needles could feel so good?! I've had acupuncture for a multitude of reasons, from strains and shoulder pains to stress and anxiety," says Lazarus, who lives in Commerce.

"I always walk out of Julie's office feeling a million times better than when I walked in. And there's no question that it boosts my immune system. When I'm regular with my appointments, I stay healthy and balanced. While other acupuncturists have left me feeling like a pin cushion, Julie is compassionate, competent and has turned into a close friend."

Their Training

Silver, who will turn 50 in May, holds a master's degree in social work from Wayne State University. She is an active member of several professional organizations, including the American Study for Reproductive Medicine, RESOLVE, the National Association of Women Business Owners and the American Association of Oriental Medicine. She is vice president of the Michigan Association of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine and was recently elected to the board of directors of the Hebrew Free Loan Association of Metropolitan Detroit.

Shindler-Cohen, who is the daughter of Marc Shindler, owner of Brody's in West Bloomfield, has a specialty in traditional Chinese medicine. She spent time last summer in China, learning from the experts.

After earning an undergraduate degree in cellular and molecular biology from the University of Michigan, Shindler-Cohen married Marc Cohen and moved to Chicago, where she earned a master's at the Pacific College of Oriental Medicine. She is NCCAOM [National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine] board-certified in acupuncture and Chinese herbology.

Shindler-Cohen returned to Michigan a year ago specifically to join this practice.

Leibson earned a master's degree at the Santa Barbara College of Oriental Medicine and is a NCCAOM board-certified acu-

puncturist. She has been trained in the treatment of physical and musculoskeletal injuries. In addition to working with a general patient clientele, Leibson works with alcohol and drug detoxification as well as hospice patients.

Plus, Leibson has extensive training in Chinese herbs, physical medicine and anatomy and physiology. She earned specialized training in Chinese medicine and infertility with an additional focus on using acupuncture to ensure healthy pregnancy, easy childbirth and post-partum wellness.

Dr. Jen Green is a naturopathic doctor, trained in Toronto and wife to Cantor Michael Smolash of Temple Israel in West Bloomfield. She works with the practice and at Royal Oak-based Beaumont Hospital.

“One thing I really respect and enjoy about working with this practice,” she says, “is that Julie and Monica and Julie are committed to helping patients with lifestyle changes. Yes they’re doing acupuncture, they’re doing Chinese herbs, but they’re really addressing lifestyle issues – that is

foundational. It’s a lovely environment.

“I love practicing with these women because they are so heart-centered — they care so deeply about their patients and are really committed to constantly learning. We’re all doing continuing education all the time.”

Naturopathic Orientation

Green joined the practice about four years ago. Her practice offers nutrition, herbal medicine, homeopathy, mind-body medicine and lifestyle counseling — “adjunctive care to help people pick and choose what therapies will work for them.”

“One thing I love about working with Julie Silver specifically is that she is really supportive of local Michigan businesses and the Jewish community,” says Green, who is an environmental activist and helps run the environment committee at Temple Israel. “Our health and the health of our environment are the same.

“Some of the issues that I’m seeing are largely environmentally related – poor air quality, poor water quality, mercury toxicity — which I’ve seen a bunch of times



Jen Green, Julie Shindler-Cohen, Monica Mae Leibson and Julie Silver

in kids now. Certainly with cancer and breast cancer specifically, there are huge environmental links to breast cancer and hormone-disrupting chemicals.”

Green’s practice focuses on women and pediatrics, though she treats all manner of

patients. She has specialized in work with cancer patients, mental health, asthma and ADHD and HIV. She is mother to Ayla, 5, and Cedar, 2, and lives in West Bloomfield.

Like everyone in this practice, Green chose her area of focus because she wanted to have time with her patients and really make a difference in the way people live and flourish.

“I wanted to have a strong therapeutic alliance with my patients — to delve into the mind-body connection,” she says.

“The principles of naturopathic medicine are: doctor as teacher, preventive medicine, teaching lifestyle choices, unique person/unique treatment,” explains Green.

That approach is integral for the entire practice, as is the focus on harnessing the body’s innate healing capabilities.

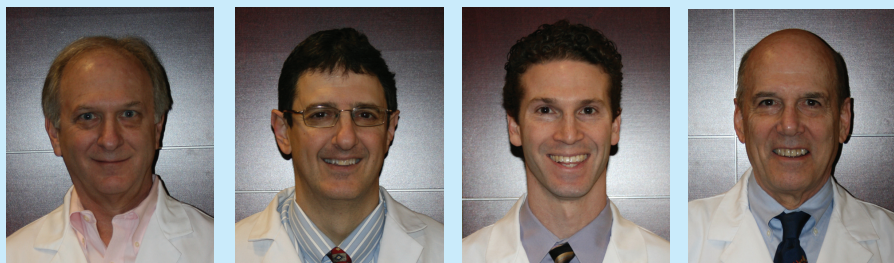
“Everything we do at Acupuncture Healthcare Associates of Michigan is dedicated to helping people move forward in their health,” says Silver. □

Lynne Meredith Schreiber is a writer, publicist and chief creative officer of Your People LLC, Southfield.

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