



Accessible for Your LIFE. Your LOCATION. Your HEALTH.

## Welcome to Our Community!

Please take a minute to read this introduction to our clinic and to our community. We are delighted that you are interested in joining us!

### **What is different about the ICA clinic?**

#### **• We treat in a community setting**

Most acupuncturists in the US treat patients on tables in private rooms. This is not true in China where acupuncture usually occurs in a community setting. In our clinic we primarily use recliners, clustered in groups in an open, soothing space. Treating patients in a community setting has many benefits: it's easy for friends and family members to come in for treatment together and a collective energetic field becomes established which actually makes individual treatments more powerful. Treatments generally last around an hour, though modifications can be made if you have time constraints or need extra time to relax.

Many people fall asleep, and wake feeling refreshed.

#### **• We have a sliding scale**

The only way that we at ICA can make acupuncture affordable and still make a living ourselves is to streamline our treatments and see multiple patients in an hour, so we have returned to the traditional approach; instead of asking you lots of questions, we rely on pulse diagnosis to diagnose and treat. This is exactly how acupuncture is practiced traditionally in China -- many patients per hour and very little talking.

Please see the enclosed form that explains our sliding scale. Because we have a sliding scale, we cannot do insurance billing (that's the insurance companies' rule). If you have insurance that covers acupuncture, we'll be happy to give you a payment receipt, and you can submit it; that's OK with the insurance companies.

### **Our Commitment to You**

We want to make it possible for you to receive acupuncture regularly enough and long enough to get better and stay better. We want our community to be welcoming to all different kinds of people. We want to give you the tools to take care of your own health. We will provide a safe environment with skilled practitioners.

## **What We Need From You**

### **• Responsibility**

ICA does not provide primary care medicine! Acupuncture is a wonderful complement to Western medicine, but it is not a substitute for it. If you think you have a problem that is not “garden variety” (meaning, you are worried that you might have a serious infection, a malignant growth, or an injury that won’t heal), or if you want someone to go over the details of your medical history from a western medical perspective, you need to see a primary care physician (ND, MD, or DO). We can provide some excellent, affordable referrals, even if you have no insurance coverage. But you cannot expect us to diagnose and treat something really serious. We can provide complimentary care for conditions, which require a physician’s attention -- for instance, we often treat patients for the side effects of chemotherapy. But we need you to take responsibility for your own health.

ICA does not receive grants, state or federal money, or insurance reimbursement. ICA exists because patients pay for their treatments – it a sustainable community business model.

### **• Flexibility**

The community setting requires some flexibility from you. For instance, many patients have a favorite recliner. When we are busy, someone may be sitting in yours. Similarly, we have a few patients who snore. Other patients who dislike snoring bring earplugs to their treatments. We are grateful for this! Some of our patients even bring favorite blankets from home with them, because they prefer theirs to ours.

That’s fine with us. Basically, we need you to participate in making yourself comfortable in the community room before we arrive to treat you.

In terms of how long you want to stay – let us know when you check in if you need to be somewhere at a certain time! We’ll make sure you’re out on time.

### **• Community-Mindedness**

The soothing atmosphere in our clinic exists because all of our patients create it by relaxing together. We appreciate everyone’s presence! This kind of collective stillness is a rare and precious thing in our rushed and busy society. Maintaining this reservoir of calm requires that no one talk very much in the clinic space. If you would like to speak to a practitioner one-on-one at any length, please let us know. If you want to have a substantial conversation, we will probably need to schedule that separately and might need to do it by phone.

If you have questions about acupuncture and how it works – please ask us for the materials we have on that subject. Unfortunately, we can’t explain what every point does, or how acupuncture works, while we are treating you -- these are very large topics!

Part of our success is that our patients learn the “routine” and take on a lot of responsibility for the appointments. Re-scheduling and making payment happens at

the front desk BEFORE each treatment, so you can relax and enjoy treatment. Please take all personal belongings, (bags, shoes, etc.) with you to your chair. And of course, PLEASE TURN OFF YOUR CELL PHONE.

- **Commitment**

Acupuncture is a PROCESS. It is very rare for any acupuncturist to be able to resolve a problem with one treatment. In China, a typical treatment protocol for a chronic condition could be acupuncture every other day for three months! Most of our patients don't need that much acupuncture, but virtually every patient requires a course of treatment, rather than a single treatment, in order to get what they want from acupuncture.

One big reason that we are able to keep our prices so low is because of the extraordinary amount of marketing our patients do on our behalf -- we don't have to advertise. We cannot express how grateful we are for this. Our patients are such effective marketers because they have first-hand experience of how well acupuncture works. All of our satisfied patients basically made a commitment to a course of treatment.

On your first visit, your acupuncturist will suggest a course of treatment, which can be anything from "we'd like to see you once a week for six weeks" to "we'd really like to see you every day for the next four days". This suggestion is based on our experience with treating different kinds of conditions. If you don't come in often enough or long enough, acupuncture probably won't work for you. The purpose of our sliding scale is to help you make that commitment. If you have questions about how long it will take to see results, please ask us, or if you think you need to adjust your treatment plan, please let us know. We need you to commit to the process of treatment in order to get good results.

And, last, but not least.... enjoy the space. We do, and hope that Ithaca Community Acupuncture can be an important part of your community.

Thank you,

**Ithaca Community Acupuncture Staff**