



CURRENT PRACTICES in INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

*The Alliance Institute
for Integrative Medicine:
A Clinical Center Model*

Integrative medicine is changing the way medicine is practiced in America. However, no two integrative medicine clinics or programs are identical. While many share patient populations, philosophies of care and treatment protocols, clinics and programs across the US utilize different approaches and economics, and often offer different services aimed at market segments unique to their locale and mission.

The Bravewell Current Practices in Integrative Medicine project documents and disseminates the many ways that integrative medicine is emerging within our health care system. All Current Practices presented are evidenced-based and have been vetted by a committee of experts.

Released in 2007, *Best Practices in Integrative Medicine: A Report from the Bravewell Clinical Network* outlined the current practices of seven leading integrative medicine clinics in the US. From core business models to strategies for growth to key services provided and effective marketing programs, *Best Practices in Integrative Medicine* presented how each of these clinics have achieved growing success within their own unique marketplace and corporate structure.

In this special Current Practices in Integrative Medicine Report, Bravewell presents a portion of the *Best Practices in Integrative Medicine: A Report from the Bravewell Clinical Network* for a focused examination of each of the highlighted clinical centers. All seven clinical center model studies can be downloaded at www.bravewell.org.

Starting in 2010, Bravewell began updating the Best Practices report. Current information can be found at www.bravewell.org.

THE ALLIANCE INSTITUTE FOR INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE

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The Alliance Institute for Integrative Medicine was founded by in 1999 as the shared vision of its medical directors, Steve and Sandi Amoils, MDs and the Health Alliance of Greater Cincinnati.

The Health Alliance is a Cincinnati-based medical system that includes the Christ Hospital, Jewish Hospital, Fort Hamilton Hospital, University Hospital, St Luke's Hospitals, Drake Center and a primary care group, Alliance Primary Care.

The Alliance Institute's philosophy is to combine ancient wisdom with modern medicine in order to maximize the body's innate potential to heal and rejuvenate. The Center also practices preventive medicine. All medical treatments are physician-directed, and each patient is treated with the aim to restore health on all levels — body, mind and spirit.

The Amoils, both family physicians, hold a vision for healthcare that is inspired by their 25-year quest to experience, learn, practice and teach alternative therapies and integrative medicine. Following medical school, they spent two years traveling throughout the world, intent on meeting healers in indigenous medical systems who were achieving "miracle cures" that defied pathophysiology as understood by Western medicine. This included studying acupuncture, naturopathy, osteopathy, meditation and energy healing techniques internationally.

BUSINESS MODEL

The Alliance Institute for Integrative Medicine provides adjunctive care for patients seeking help in achieving and maintaining health and wellness. Conditions treated include (but are not limited to) allergies, anxiety and stress, arthritis and/or joint pain, athletic injuries, carpal tunnel syndrome, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue, headaches, infertility, irritable bowel syndrome, spinal stenosis, tennis elbow, whiplash injury, and women's issues, including PMS and menopausal symptoms. Most patients are self-referred.

The Alliance Institute physicians do not practice primary care. Rather, the Center is meant to serve as an adjunct to conventional medicine.

The Center has five major revenue streams — (1) clinical care, (2) spa services, (3) retail, (4) exercise programs and (5) educational programs.



Dr. Sandi Amoils conducting an acupuncture session at the Alliance Institute.

Clinical Care

The Alliance Institute for Integrative Medicine subscribes to the ancient philosophy of medicine: there's no single cause for illness, and no singular cure. That's why they offer a unique combination of therapies, customized for each patient. The Institute has the most experienced team of physician acupuncturists in the Cincinnati region. The Center's doctors include family physicians, an oncologist, an OB/GYN and an orthopedic surgeon. All are trained to perform a variety of services, including integrative medicine consultations, medical acupuncture, nutritional counseling, as well as standard medical care. At the Institute, the doctors and therapists believe in a "team" approach to healing – often working in conjunction with each other, as well as with other physicians outside of the Institute.

The Alliance Institute for Integrative Medicine's unique signature service, called the ACE Healing Treatment, is designed to deliver maximum results. This service consists of a chiropractic treatment, acupuncture and energy healing delivered consecutively in one session. The ACE is one of the Center's most beneficial and profitable services.

The Spa

The Alliance Institute offers a variety of spa services such as therapeutic and lymphatic massage, healing stone therapy, mud wraps, cleansing steam therapy and its popular stress relieving treatment, the "Re-Vitalizer" (a modification of the Ayurvedic "panchakarma" treatment which includes *Shirodhara* – the pouring of warm oil over the forehead and scalp). These can be accessed as an individual service or as part of a treatment plan.

Retail

The Alliance Institute has a retail store located adjacent to the reception waiting area which offers books, CDs, quality-tested vitamins and herbal supplements, and a range of personal care and gift products — all of which contribute to the Institute's income.

Exercise

The Alliance Institute's medical directors created a unique exercise program, called High Chi™. High Chi combines cardiovascular exercise (SPINNING®) with stretching and strengthening (including Pilates, yoga and meditation). These classes, which are offered daily, are paid per class or through a monthly/annual membership fee.

Education

The Alliance Institute for Integrative Medicine offers a variety of educational classes on a



All Alliance Institute physicians are trained as acupuncturists. Shown here, Dr. Liz Woolford works on a patient.

regular basis. These include:

- Classes for physicians on various aspects of integrative medicine. These include acupuncture, nutritional and other workshops. The Institute also hosts the Ohio Chapter of the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture.
- Classes for the public on common problems such as menopause, weight loss, fibromyalgia and headache, and how to treat them using integrative medicine techniques.
- Classes for nurses and the public on energy medicine techniques.
- Inspirational seminars for the public with well-known sports and entertainment figures.

Fiscal Model

Until March 2007, the Alliance Institute for Integrative Medicine received some services from its parent organization, mostly in the form of financial management and malpractice insurance. After March 2007, the Institute separated from the Health Alliance, self-funding all its services. The Amoils have recently established a separate non-profit foundation, The Integrative Medicine Foundation.

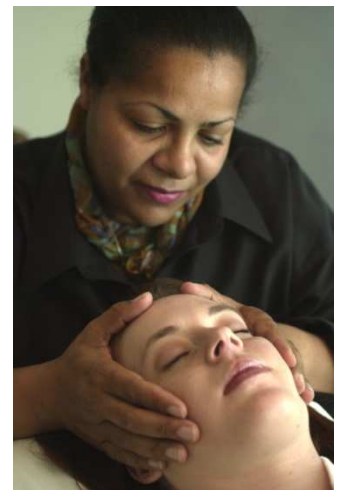
The full-time physicians and staff are on salary. Other practitioners, such as those offerings spa services, are paid on a per session basis. The Alliance Institute does not accept insurance except for Medicare. All physician, chiropractic and spa services generate a profit. Massage and energy healing, which are vital to the healing process but do not generate a profit, are subsidized.

CLINICAL MODEL

All patients who visit the Alliance Institute for medical purposes begin with a one-hour physician consultation in order to evaluate the “whole” person. This typically includes conventional Western medical evaluation, but adds Functional Medicine and Chinese and Ayurvedic diagnostic techniques, as well as an emotional and lifestyle evaluation. The Institute’s physicians then work with each patient to create a “healing partnership” — considering the patient’s individualized goals and needs. Prescribed treatments may include pharmaceutical prescription(s), protocolized supplements, diet and exercise recommendations, stress reduction techniques and a variety of therapies, such as chiropractic, acupuncture, massage, craniosacral therapy and/or energy healing.

Aside from the physician acupuncturists, the Institute also has an array of other practitioners, including chiropractors, energy healers, massage therapists, a Rolfer, dietician, yoga/Pilates/Spinning™ instructors, and a craniosacral therapist

In addition to the medical services offered, the public is also welcome to come to the Alliance Institute for spa treatments and exercise classes.



Marcia Fields, RN, conducts an energy healing session at the Alliance Institute.

Table 1 below outlines what services are available on-site and what types of practitioners deliver that care.

TABLE 1

Services and provider types at Alliance Institute for Integrative Medicine

SERVICE	PROVIDER
ACE	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD); Chiropractor (DC); Energy Healer
Acupuncture	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD)
Allergies, Sinus, Arthritis	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD)
Athletic Injuries, Tennis Elbow, Whiplash	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD); Chiropractor (DC); Massage Therapist
Chiropractic	Chiropractor (DC)
Conventional Care	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD)
Craniosacral Therapy	Craniosacral Therapists
Cancer Care	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD); Energy Healer; Massage Therapist; Dietitian
Carpal Tunnel	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD); Chiropractor (DC)
Energy Healing	RNs (predominantly)
Exercise	High Chi™ instructors
Fibromyalgia and Chronic Fatigue	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD); Chiropractor (DC); Massage Therapist; Energy Healer; Dietitian
Functional Medicine	Physician (MD); Nutritionist

Headaches	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD); Chiropractor (DC); Massage Therapist; Energy Healer; Dietitian; Craniosacral Therapy
IM Consultation with Diagnosis	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD)
Infertility	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD)
Irritable Bowel Syndrome	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD); Dietitian
Massage	Certified Massage Therapist (CMT)
Nutrigenomics	Physician (MD)
Nutrition	Dietitian
Reflexology	Reflexologists
Rolfing	Certified Rolfers
Spinal Stenosis	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD); Chiropractor (DC); Massage Therapist
Stress Reduction	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD); Chiropractor (DC); Massage Therapist; Energy Healer; Dietitian
Supplements (vitamin, dietary and herbal)	Physician (MD), Nutritionist
Wellness and Lifestyle Consultations	Physician (MD)
Women's Issues	Physician/Acupuncturist (MD); Massage Therapist; Energy Healer; Dietitian

PATIENT VOLUME

The physicians and integrative providers at the Alliance Institute average 20,000 patient visits per year. Patients come to the center by word-of-mouth, physician referrals, Internet searches, print ads, and Yellow Page advertising. Also, many new patients come after hearing an Alliance Institute physician speak at a scheduled educational event, in or outside the Institute. The patient population is primarily adults who are educated and in the middle to upper income level, but patients of all ages and demographics do visit the Institute. The majority of patients are self-referred.

LEADERSHIP AND STAFFING

The Alliance Institute for Integrative Medicine was founded and continues to be directed by Steve and Sandi Amoils, MDs. The Amoils serve both as medical directors and executive directors in guiding the Institute's vision, operations and growth. When they first created the Institute, the Amoils envisioned a model wherein the Institute would become a community gathering place for people interested in achieving and maintaining optimal health and emotional well-being. They wanted to ensure there would be continual integration of complementary with conventional therapies, with concomitant research and education. That goal, which has guided all aspects of their business and clinical practice, has resulted in a profitable center.

Dr. Claudia Harsh, a well-known OB/GYN in the community, writes a column in a local magazine and attracts many women seeking complementary therapies for various complaints. Dr. Liz Woolford is a family physician who gives frequent talks both in and outside the Institute. The Alliance Institute also has two well-known part time physicians — Dr. Jim Lenard, an orthopedic surgeon, and Dr. John Sacco, an oncologist. In addition, the Institute's full-time senior chiropractor, Dr. Steve Bleser, is well known in the community and attracts many patients for chiropractic services. Subsequently, these patients often visit the Alliance Institute for other therapies. The Institute employs a full-time dietician/nutritionist, Lisa Hedke, who also oversees the retail store.

The full-time employees include the four physicians, a chiropractor, the dietician, an office manager, several receptionists and office personnel. The majority of the complementary providers (massage therapists, energy healers, etc.) are employed on a per-session, contract basis.

LOCATION AND PREMISES

The Alliance Center for Integrative Medicine is located in an affluent suburb of Cincinnati, Ohio. The Institute is housed in a stand-alone building with 11,625 square feet of usable space and a large parking lot. The building has 16 exam rooms, a large waiting/reception area, a large auditorium for exercise classes and educational seminars, and several private offices.

PHILANTHROPY

Unlike most integrative medicine centers, the Alliance Institute does not depend on philanthropic support to maintain its operations. Although it has no formal program to generate philanthropic gifts or foundation grants, it has, over the past several years, received about \$450,000 in donations, mostly through patients.

GROWTH STRATEGIES

The Alliance Institute for Integrative Medicine has disengaged from the Health Alliance and formed a new, for-profit organization, which is retaining the name of the Alliance Institute for Integrative Medicine. A not-for-profit foundation — The Integrative Medicine Foundation — will focus on issues of importance to the Amoils.

The Institute and the Foundation will have separate boards. The goal of the for-profit organization will be to successfully manage and continue to grow the Alliance Institute and expand its capacities.

The goals of the Foundation are to:

- Educate healthcare providers and the public about the “responsible” use of integrative medicine;
- Promote further use of integrative medicine for mainstream America (including collaboration with other similar Foundations);
- Train integrative medicine fellows;
- Provide care for those who cannot afford the Institute’s services;
- Conduct integrative medicine research; and
- Focus on improving healthcare by showing how an integrative approach can reduce the cost of care while improving health and quality of life.

The Alliance Institute’s current growth strategy is two-fold:

- Create more efficiency within the organization; and
- Develop a process by which the Institute can successfully be replicated in other geographic areas.

MOST SUCCESSFUL ACTIONS

The Institute, which is financially profitable and enjoys clinical success, attributes its achievements to the following actions:

- The ACE Treatment, which consists of acupuncture, a chiropractic treatment and energy healing, is the most profitable service the Institute offers. The patient stays in the same treatment room. The chiropractic session is administered first, then the acupuncture session. While the needles are being set, the energy healer balances and enhances the patient’s energy field. Not only is it clinically successful for pain reduction, health and wellness, it also enables three practitioners to efficiently see up to four patients in an

hour, making it economically viable as well.

- The High Chi™ Exercise Program helps patients increase their cardiovascular health and improve their physical energy and emotional vitality. High Chi is immensely popular and brings new clientele into the Institute.
- The Institute enjoys a high level of utilization with its own practitioners. Believing that everyone “goes in and out of balance”, physicians and therapists often treat each other in order to retain good physical and emotional health. There is a very high sense of camaraderie and “pride” about the center, for those associated with the Institute.
- The medical directors have purposely created systems wherein physicians can easily assume treatments for each other. Therefore, patients do not necessarily become dependent on one doctor and often benefit by a new person’s perspective.
- Integrating functional medicine and nutrigenomics with the other complementary therapies has improved clinical outcomes.
- Teaching classes has allowed the physicians to reach multiple patients simultaneously.

Working closely with the local medical community and honoring the primary care and other respective physicians’ relationships with his or her patients has resulted in mutual respect, a good reputation for the Institute and a growing number of referrals.