



Acupuncture in the Public Health Setting

By Beth Sommers, MPH, LAc and Kristen Porter, MAc, LAc

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Beth Sommers and Kristen Porter are the research director and executive director, respectively, of Pathways to Wellness, a holistic medicine clinic in Boston, Massachusetts. Operating within Pathways is the AIDS Care Project, a non-profit public health clinic begun in 1988 that treats patients with HIV and AIDS using acupuncture, Chinese herbal medicine, and bodywork therapies. It is the largest Asian medicine HIV/AIDS clinic in the United States, providing more than 13,000 treatments per year.

Kristen earned a diplomate in acupuncture from the New England School of Acupuncture (NESA) in 1994, followed by a three-month internship at Hangzhou Hospital in conjunction with the Zhejiang College of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Hangzhou, China. She returned to NESA to earn her master's degree in acupuncture in 2001. She is also a certified herbalist. Before studying acupuncture, she received a bachelors degree in business management from Boston University.

Beth is also a graduate of NESA, and is celebrating her 25th year of practicing acupuncture. She holds a master's degree in public health from Boston University. She received training at Lincoln Hospital from the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association, and was instrumental in founding two clinics in Boston. As a member of the American Public Health Association, she edits the newsletter for its group of CAM. She is also a part of the Health Services Research Department of the Boston University School of Public Health.

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