

# HSM COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH SERVICES

## ACUPUNCTURE

Acupuncture originated in China more than 2,000 years ago. The term describes a family of procedures involving stimulation of anatomical locations by various techniques. In the past two decades, acupuncture has steadily grown in popularity in the United States. A frequently referenced study in 1998 reported that Americans make more than 5 million visits to acupuncture providers per year. According to the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM), one in 10 adults has received acupuncture. Traditional Chinese Medicine theorizes that there are more than 2,000 acupuncture points on the human body and that these connect to 12 main and eight secondary pathways called meridians. Qi, a form of energy, flows through these pathways and may become obstructed. By gently inserting hair-thin needles at specific points, acupuncture can remove these obstructions and restore the flow of Qi.

## INDICATIONS AND RESEARCH

Acupuncture may be used as a stand alone treatment or in conjunction with conventional medical treatments. It has become one of the most researched forms of complementary medicine today and thus is becoming more accepted by traditional medicine. The National Institute of Health (NIH) reviewed the available literature and developed a Consensus Statement in 1997 describing acupuncture and summarizing the indications for applicable acupuncture treatment. This document states that promising results have emerged that show efficacy for postoperative nausea and postoperative dental pain. Other indications where acupuncture may be useful include: addiction, stroke rehabilitation, headache, menstrual cramps, tennis elbow, fibromyalgia, myofascial pain, osteoarthritis, low back pain, and carpal tunnel syndrome. A recent text chapter on acupuncture reviewed the studies for Low Back Pain and concluded that a majority of patients will derive some clinically significant short-term benefits from acupuncture. The indications for treatment by an HSM network acupuncturist are based on more recent literature review and concentrate on the musculoskeletal system. The HSM indicators include: headache, back pain, osteoarthritis, tendonitis/bursitis, myofascial pain and Fibromyalgia.

## BENEFIT CONSIDERATIONS

There are several reasons for an employer, payer or health plan to offer an acupuncture benefit including 1) consumer demand, 2) ever-increasing clinical literature to corroborate the effectiveness, 3) the costs can be minimal when its utilization is limited to certain indications and diagnoses and 4) benefits may be included in physician-directed (MD) multi-disciplinary pain management programs.

## UTILIZATION AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The goal for HSM is to ensure appropriate, efficient and effective health care. The parameters set for coding and billing reflect the treatment indications and the appropriate scope of practice for the acupuncture provider. There are limited diagnostic codes and procedure codes available to these providers. All HSM acupuncture providers are subject to concurrent claims review as well as utilization parameters. Providers are required to submit documentation for peer review once parameters are exceeded or billing practices are inappropriate.

## CREDENTIALLED PRACTITIONERS

Acupuncture services are provided by two types of medical professionals. **Medical Doctors** (MDs) are required to have 200-300 hours of training in addition to their medical training. There are about 3,000 medical doctors who use acupuncture as part of their clinical practice. **Certified Acupuncturists** complete between 2,000 and 3,000 hours of training and most states require that they complete board exams. There are approximately 11,000 certified acupuncturists who practice in the United States and 41 states have licensure laws. HSM credentials both types of professionals utilizing NCQA compliant standards and by adhering to established criteria that primary sources education, licensure, certification and competency. For more information, visit our website at [www.hsminc.com](http://www.hsminc.com) or contact Jim Wieland at 952-225-5700 or [jgwieland@magellanhealth.com](mailto:jgwieland@magellanhealth.com).