

Flavia M. Lewis, MSW, LAC, CACIII

13517 Albion Circle

Thornton, CO 80241

It's the best relaxation, anti-anxiety drug there is – better than Valium or Lorazepam. I'm talking about ear-auricular acupuncture, the 5-needle NADA Protocol. Acupuncture is one tool on the tool belt for recovery and improved health.

During the 20 years I was privileged to serve as Executive Director at the Mile High Council on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse (The Council), acupuncture was provided for our clients and staff. In 1994, after the start-up of the Denver Drug Court, we started treatment in the Denver County Jail, which included acupuncture 3 times weekly. Acupuncture was also provided for the SISTERS Project, a 6-week treatment program for incarcerated women delivered on the jail property. During the 8 years of program operation, we learned much from our participants. Inmates felt such improvement in reducing stress and anxiety, sleeping better and being better able to think through situations rather than react emotionally. After only 4 acupuncture treatments, no inmates had a Class 1 offense. Unfortunately, budget cuts following September 11, 2001 forced the end of the program in the jail.

There are so many advantages of ear point acupuncture. There are no side-effects with acupuncture as there are with most medications. The worst thing that might occur is that acupuncture won't do anything. Many individuals take more than one medication – there are no worries about co-mingling meds with acupuncture. Acupuncture can be effective treatment for all drugs, including nicotine. It is not drug-specific as methadone is for heroin.

We are all very concerned today about economics and cost. It is not sustainable for addictions and mental health programs to exclusively depend on hiring an outside contracted acupuncturist at \$30 - \$70/hour to perform the NADA protocol. It would be much more cost-effective for trained staff working in the context of a chemical dependency, mental health or behavioral health treatment program to be able to administer the 5-needle treatment.

I have talked with numerous colleagues from a variety of work environments about their thoughts concerning passage of the Acudetox HB 12-1141. Everyone is very enthused regarding treatment possibilities with various treatment modalities, and are absolutely committed to using only the 5 ear points and absolutely NOT hold themselves out as full-body acupuncturists. The majority of us hold licensure in our professional field of choice and not jeopardize that in any way.

**Randy Mergler, M.S., LMFT**

**1110 Club View Terrace**

**Fort Collins, CO 80524**

**Mobile: 970.980.6308**

**dadrjm@juno.com**

February 14, 2012

Dear Sirs/Misses:

I am a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) living and practicing in Fort Collins, Colorado.

I recently attended the 38<sup>th</sup> Winter Symposium on Addictive Disorders, and while there learned about HB 12-1141, which addresses the issue of certifying specific professionals to perform the *Acudetox* acupuncture treatment on individuals suffering with alcoholism or other addictive disorders. Passing this bill would allow many more professionals, like me, who work with these struggling individuals, to treat them with a non-pharmaceutical, and most importantly, a safer and non-toxic way to rid their bodies of the chemical poisons such as alcohol and its by-products. It would indeed save lives.

I attended Dr. Libby Stuyt's presentation on the *Acudetox* technique at this Symposium and was very encouraged by the research she presented, and the simplicity of this technique for effectively treating folks with life-threatening disorders. I spoke with Dr. Stuyt afterwards and left feeling more encouraged than I have in quite some time.

I am unable to attend this hearing on the 16th because I will be attending the funeral of a 51-year old friend, nurse, and mother, who I believe would have had a better chance at recovery from her addiction if this treatment were readily available. She had been trying many different medications the past year to find relief from her anxiety, and her addiction, with little success. Sadly, she died last week.

Although I thoroughly believe in the practice of acupuncture I am not interested in pursuing this skill as a profession. I am only interested in learning the *Acudetox* technique in order to make it readily available to therapy clients of mine who, as mentioned above, are struggling with addictive disorders. I am glad to leave the rest of the practice of acupuncture to those professionally, expertly, and caringly trained!

I implore you to pass HB12-1141 quickly to give us access to a proven tool to help many folks who are suffering from life-threatening addictive illnesses.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to share my professional opinion on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Randy Mergler, M.S., LMFT

To whom it may concern.

2/8/12

I am a licensed professional counselor and a certified addiction counselor and have worked at a community mental health center in the adult outpatient program for 13 years. During the last four years I have been involved in our co-occurring treatment program. The vast majority of our clients have difficulties with both mental health and substance abuse issues. They frequently struggle with chronic symptoms of PTSD in addition to other mental illnesses and those symptoms often become exacerbated when clients are trying to live without drugs or alcohol. This can result in increased levels of stress, irritability, anxiety, insomnia, nightmares, increased startle responses and at least initially also in frequent cravings for the substances they are trying to give up. Our clients often have limited access to healthcare services because they are poor.

I recently attended the Winter Symposium for Mental Health and Addiction Counseling in Colorado Springs where I heard a presentation on the benefits of using acupunctur acupuncture as an adjunct treatment modality for clients working on recovering from mental health issues and addiction. As far as I can tell, this procedure would have great benefits to assist clinicians like myself in providing clients very rapid relief from stress responses, insomnia and cravings for substances. Adequate sleep and relaxation can be healing in itself and plays an important part in the recovery of the brain.

It is my understanding that training for this particular procedure is very inexpensive and simple and could expand a mental health clinician's and addiction counselor's repertoire of techniques in order to become more effective in treating the whole person. I am advocating for the passage of the House Bill 12 1141 so that professionals like myself can become more holistic practitioners. In this time of strapped budgets, I believe that training practitioners like myself in this safe and easily administered modality could lead to cost savings in the long term as clients will be more likely to experience a more rapid recovery from their mental health and addiction issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Verena Burger Schmid, MA, LPC, CACII  
2913 County Rd 103  
Florence, CO 81226

Tamera Edwards, MSW, LSW, LASAC, ADS  
223 W. Cheyenne Rd  
Colorado Springs, Co  
80906  
719-344-8164

February, 2012

**Re: HB12-1141 Acudetox Bill**

Dear Members of The House of Representatives:

I am writing in support of HB12-1141. I am unable to be in attendance today.

My name is Tamera Edwards. I'm a licensed social worker, a licensed addiction counselor, and a NADA trained auricular acupuncture detox specialist (ADS). In 1993, I flew from Alaska to New York to be trained in the auricular acupuncture protocol at the Lincoln Recovery Center in New York City, under the direction of Dr. Michael Smith.

During my training, there were four of us who provided treatments to approximately three hundred addicted people, of all ages and levels of addiction, each day. Prior to training, I had researched this treatment, however, I wasn't prepared for the quick transformations I witnessed in people during my week and a half of training. I saw people at their bottom, both physically and mentally, respond to acudetox treatments within a matter of days.

In the nineteen years since I've been trained I've been able to provide treatments to people on Native American Reservations in Arizona and a small Alaska Native bush village, on the Yukon River in Alaska. I've continued to observe improved mental health, and freedom from their active addictions, for people who receive auricular acupuncture treatments. This is a powerful tool for recovering people.

Acudetox is not a cure for addictions. It compliments other mental health modalities, such as counseling and twelve-step groups. Since Acudetox recipients are both physically and mentally improved following Acudetox treatments, they are more receptive to counseling and twelve-step groups, as well as medical advice from physicians.

I plan to provide this treatment to people, either in a facility where Acudetox is provided to clients, or in my own office, should this treatment be allowed in Colorado.

I thank you for your time and consideration. My hope is that you will pass this Bill and give the people of Colorado a therapeutic tool that will improve mental health issues.

Sincerely,

  
Tamera Edwards, MSW, LSW, LASAC, ADS

*Healing Horizons*

## Integrated Health Solutions

February 6, 2012

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing in support of the AcuDetox bill HB 12-1141, which when passed will allow additional licensed and certified professionals to provide this five point ear acupuncture protocol to their clients. AcuDetox therapy, or auricular five-point acupuncture, has been well researched and shown to be especially effective in the treatment of substance abuse and posttraumatic stress disorder. In addition, anecdotal evidence suggests Acudetox therapy is helpful for persons with fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue, digestive issues, and ADHD/ADD. Clients receiving the treatment report increased feelings of peace and calm, sleep better, are less depressed and anxious, and suffer fewer withdrawal symptoms.

I am a licensed psychologist providing psychological services in an integrated complementary care practice in Grand Junction. Working together with licensed acupuncturists, and practitioners of homeopathy, Rolf structural integration, massage, cranial sacral therapy, and therapeutic skin care, we provide health care to a wide variety of clientele, many of whom present with one or more of the concerns for which five-point auricular acupuncture is shown to be helpful.

With the passage of HB 12-1141 I will be able to provide the benefits of five point acupuncture to small groups of clients in an outpatient setting and combine said treatment with adjunctive therapies such as imagery and meditation. From both an economic and a therapeutic perspective, providing therapy in small groups is sound practice. It saves money, and the energy of the group provides emotional support via the knowledge that you are not alone with your health concern.

As you consider HB 12-1141 I hope you will be mindful of the additional effective and affordable health care you will be making available to all of the constituents in Colorado.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paula King  
Licensed psychologist