

# Number of veterans affairs facilities offering acupuncture growing rapidly

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Acupuncture is an increasingly important and effective component of chronic pain management and other areas of care in the Veterans Health Administration (VHA). Over the past 7 years, the number of VHA facilities offering acupuncture has increased from 42% to 88%, according to an article published in a special issue on the use of acupuncture in the Veterans Health Administration in *Medical Acupuncture*.

A guest editorial called "[Acupuncture and Whole Health in the Veterans Administration](#)," was coauthored by Guest Editors Kavitha Reddy, MD, ABoIM, VA St. Louis Healthcare System, Veterans Health Administration, and Washington University School of Medicine (St. Louis, MO); David Drake, MD, Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center (Richmond, VA), Integrative Health Coordinating Center (Washington, DC), and Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond, VA); and Benjamin Kligler, MD, MPH, Integrative Health Coordinating Center (Washington, DC) and Veterans Health Administration (Brooklyn, NY).

The Guest Editors point to [chronic pain management](#) as a prime example of how "the current model of healthcare delivery is ineffective, costly, and not sustainable," and describe acupuncture as "one of the most promising nonpharmacologic approaches to pain management." In 2015, the VHA partnered with the Department of Defense on a program to train practitioners to perform auricular acupuncture. More than 1700 practitioners have now been trained. This Special Issue includes reports of some of the early outcomes of their deployment.

In the editorial entitled "[Medical Acupuncture: The Department of Veterans Affairs](#)," contributed by *Medical Acupuncture* Editor-in-Chief Richard Niemtow, MD, Ph.D., MPH, he says, "Acupuncture is becoming well-established in the Department of Veterans Affairs." The VA is expanding and embracing its use of acupuncture, with auricular

acupuncture at the forefront, he notes. This special issue details "the acupuncture-research initiatives that clinicians are performing in such areas as: chronic pain; insomnia; pain reduction during colonoscopy; and auricular [acupuncture](#) use prior to Botulinum toxin A administration." Dr., Niemtzw states that "Having licensed acupuncturists in the VA system is becoming a reality."

**More information:** Kavitha p. Reddy et al, Acupuncture and Whole Health in the Veterans Administration, *Medical Acupuncture* (2018).  
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