



OREGON COLLEGE *of* ORIENTAL MEDICINE

ocom.edu | 75 NW Couch Street, Portland, OR 97209 | 503-253-3443

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Contact: Beth Howlett, MAcOM, LAc, Vice President of Communications and Academic Services,  
**bhowlett@ocom.edu**, 503-253-3443 x194

**January 18, 2018**

# **Low-Income Patient Access to Acupuncture Expanded by Kaiser Permanente Grant Award**

**Portland, OR** — For the fourth year in a row, Oregon College of Oriental Medicine (OCOM) received a **\$15,000 grant award from Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit Programs** supporting access to acupuncture care for low-income patients in the Portland metro area. This gift comes at a crucial time for expanding availability of alternatives to opiates for chronic pain management.

Thanks to Kaiser's support, OCOM will provide low-income community members \$15 acupuncture and Chinese medicine treatments for qualifying individuals. Enrollment in the program, *Expanding Health Care Access to Low-Income Patients*, begins in January 2018. Qualifying individuals will be eligible to enroll for five \$15 visits until October 2018 or program funds are exhausted. OCOM's affordable sliding scale fees of \$25-\$35 continue to apply throughout the year for all patients in need of access to care. Grant recipients are also eligible for the "OCOM Cares" program in the Medicinary, allowing them to purchase herbs at a 10 percent discount.

Analysis of patient survey data from 2017 grantees shows that those who receive at least five treatments at our clinics get better. Among low-income patients who received a course of five treatments, 96 percent reported having chronic conditions, with 96 percent among them reporting that their conditions improved. Ninety-nine percent of patients reported they were "extremely" or "very" satisfied with their treatments. Thirty-seven percent reported they did not use the emergency room due to access to health care at OCOM funded by this grant.

One 2017 grant recipient suffering from lower back pain, numb arms, asthma, and a mood disorder reported, "All four health problems are significantly improved. I believe I am avoiding possible neck surgery [as a result of treatment]. [With surgery] not only would I lose work time, I wouldn't be able to come to acupuncture as often as I do."

OCOM is a 35-year-old nonprofit graduate institution that operates two Portland-area teaching clinics: one in the Old Town Chinatown neighborhood and another in the Hollywood neighborhood of northeast Portland. OCOM's Chinese medicine teaching clinics served over 3,500 patients in 2017, 62 percent of which self-identify as coming from low-income households. As a member of the Coalition of Community Health Clinics, the college is committed to contributing to the safety net of health care access for the underserved.

Additional information about the program and a **downloadable application** is available on our website: **ocom.edu**, or by calling OCOM's Patient Services Team: OCOM Clinic, 503-445-0950 or OCOM Hollywood Clinic at 503-281-1917.

## **About Kaiser Permanente**

Kaiser Permanente is committed to helping shape the future of health care. We are recognized as one of America's leading health care providers and nonprofit health plans. Founded in 1945, Kaiser Permanente has a mission to provide high quality, affordable health care services and to improve the health of our members and

the communities we serve. We currently serve more than 10 million members in eight states and the District of Columbia, including more than 540,000 medical and 250,000 dental members in Oregon and Southwest Washington. Care for members and patients is focused on their total health and guided by their personal physicians, dentists, specialists and team of caregivers. Our expert and caring medical and dental teams are empowered and supported by industry-leading technology advances and tools for health promotion, disease prevention, state-of-the-art care delivery and world-class chronic disease management. Kaiser Permanente is dedicated to care innovations, clinical research, health education and the support of community health. For more information, go to: [kp.org/share](http://kp.org/share).



### **About Kaiser Permanente Community Benefit**

Community Benefit connects Kaiser Permanente with the communities we serve, expanding our influence beyond our clinics and hospitals to create new and equal opportunities for everyone to live a long, healthy life. In 2015, we contributed more than \$141 million toward healthier communities in the Northwest.

### **About OCOM**

OCOM's mission is to transform health care by educating highly skilled and compassionate practitioners, providing exemplary patient care, and engaging in innovative research within a community of service and healing. Over 1,500 graduates practice, teach, and research Chinese medicine in 50 states and across the globe, and have provided an estimated 10 million treatments over the past 35 years. Additional information about our programs is available on our website: [ocom.edu](http://ocom.edu)

**ocom.edu**

*The science of medicine, the art of healing®*