Healing River
ACUPUNCTURE CENTRE

Acupuncture Gains Mainstream Acceptance as Research and Insurance Coverage Expand Across Canada

July 27, 2026

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A Steveston Village acupuncture clinic with over 17 years of service in Richmond offers traditional Chinese medicine as demand for non-pharmacological pain management grows.

Acupuncture is experiencing a significant shift toward mainstream acceptance in Canada, with the therapy now covered by an expanding number of extended health insurance plans and recognized by provincial regulatory bodies for an increasing range of conditions. A 2024 analysis by the Canadian Institute for Health Information found that approximately one in five Canadians has used some form of complementary or alternative medicine, with acupuncture ranking among the most commonly accessed therapies. The World Health Organization recognizes acupuncture as effective for a wide range of conditions including chronic pain, postoperative nausea, and migraine prevention, while ongoing clinical trials continue to investigate its applications for additional health concerns.

In British Columbia, the regulatory framework for acupuncture has strengthened in recent years, with registered acupuncturists operating under the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and

Acupuncturists of BC. While the province's medical services plan does not yet cover acupuncture, many private insurers have expanded their coverage to include it, reducing out-of-pocket costs for patients and contributing to increased utilization. The growing body of clinical evidence supporting acupuncture's efficacy for pain management, particularly for chronic back pain and osteoarthritis, has been a key driver of this trend toward broader insurance acceptance.

Chrystal Malapas, a Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine and registered acupuncturist at Healing River Acupuncture Centre in Steveston Village, said she has observed a steady increase in first-time acupuncture patients over the past several years. "Many of the people who come to us are trying acupuncture after other approaches have not provided the relief they were looking for. We see patients dealing with chronic back pain, migraine headaches, arthritis, stress-related conditions, and fertility concerns. Modern research is increasingly validating what traditional Chinese medicine has described for thousands of years, and that has helped more people feel comfortable exploring acupuncture as a treatment option. Our role is to conduct a thorough assessment and develop a treatment plan that addresses the underlying patterns contributing to their condition, rather than just managing symptoms."

Healing River Acupuncture Centre has served the Richmond community since its founding by Bobbi Hayashi in 2009, with Malapas taking over operations in 2018. Malapas holds a Doctor of Traditional Chinese Medicine degree from PCU College of Holistic Medicine in Burnaby and completed her acupuncture training at the Western Canadian Institute of TCM Practitioners in Richmond. She also holds advanced certification in Japanese Meridian Therapy and earned a Bachelor of Science in Biology under the Pre-Med program at Ateneo de Manila University. The clinic offers acupuncture, moxibustion, cupping therapy, and facial rejuvenation acupuncture at 3571 Chatham Street, Unit 105, in the historic Steveston Village neighbourhood at the corner of Chatham Street and Third Avenue, with free parking available in a private lot.

The integration of acupuncture into broader healthcare conversations reflects a growing recognition that non-pharmacological approaches to pain management have an important role to play, particularly in the context of increasing awareness of the risks associated with long-term medication use. As research continues to build the evidence base and insurance coverage continues to expand, clinics like Healing River Acupuncture Centre are seeing demand from patients who view traditional Chinese medicine as a complement to conventional care. The clinic is open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM, and welcomes new clients from Richmond, Vancouver, and the surrounding Lower Mainland area.

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For more information about Healing River Acupuncture Centre, contact the company here:Healing River Acupuncture CentreContact Details:(604) 277-5550info@healingriveracupuncture.ca3571 Chatham St #105,

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Healing River Acupuncture Centre

Healing River Acupuncture, located in Richmond BC, offers personalized, holistic treatments rooted in Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) and acupuncture, designed to promote balance, reduce pain, and enhance overall well-being.

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