



**NCCAOM Featured PDA Provider:**  
**Mary Elizabeth Wakefield, MS, MM, Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM)<sup>®</sup>, L.Ac.**

Chi-Akra Center for Ageless Aging  
 NCCAOM PDA Provider # 47  
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**Being NCCAOM PDA Provider # 47, you are one of our first Providers for the PDA Program. What benefits encouraged you to become a PDA Provider?**

I have been an NCCAOM PDA provider for close to 20 years and collaborating with the NCCAOM and their representatives to provide excellent quality continuing education for acupuncturists and other healthcare practitioners has been a very rewarding experience. I have cultivated friendships with colleagues associated with the organization, which has similarly enriched the working partnership. My questions have always been answered, usually in a timely fashion.

**What would you tell someone who is thinking about applying to become a PDA Provider with NCCAOM?**

NCCAOM is constantly trying to improve their website, and my life and teaching partner, MichelAngelo, who, as the expert in all things digital, handles the creation and distribution of PDA certificates, etc., has found the new online interface to be extremely functional, making it easier for us to distribute these vital documents to our students from all over North America and abroad. In a similar fashion, renewal of our courses on an annual basis has likewise become a more seamless experience.



## **Why do you think PDA Providers are important to the acupuncture and Oriental medicine profession?**

As a PDA Provider, I am aware that the availability of continuing education in the Chinese medicine field is an integral part of the ongoing maturation of the licensed practitioner. CE education is not merely to permit the practitioner to fulfill PDA requirements so as to maintain their licensure, but also for the purpose of learning new techniques, modalities and ways of treating patients, and guiding them on the road to optimum health. The opportunity for practitioners to make a direct connection with a master teacher cannot be underestimated – permitting them, at first hand, to experience the communication of new ideas and concepts, to observe that teacher in demonstrations, and followed thereafter by hands-on guidance, as the student then practices the new treatment protocols. I believe that the challenge that lies in this hands-on approach allows the acupuncturists to be more present during the seminar, and likewise more accurate when they eventually have the opportunity to practice on their patients. I learn a great deal from my students, many of whom bring vast amounts of experience to the learning process.

## **Your PDA approved courses are centered around facial acupuncture and integrative therapies. How did you get interested in facial acupuncture?**

My first vocational trajectory was as a professional opera singer, and I also played the flute in orchestras in high school and university. I graduated from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, with a degree in vocal performance, and then completed my formal musical education at Indiana University, in Bloomington, the American opera “factory,” where I received my Master of Music degree. I then traveled to Europe, and lived in Munich, Germany, while furthering my studies at the Hochschule für Musik.

I wanted to discover for myself whether I wished to pursue the high-profile, demanding career of a professional opera singer by immersing myself in musical culture in Europe. I attended concerts of various types – opera, symphony, chamber music – the opportunity for such a comprehensive musical education, with exposure to leading classical musical performers in live performance, is not necessarily available to everyone who embarks on this career path.

Following upon my return to the US, I migrated to New York City, where I was fortunate enough to attract the attention of an extremely influential Viennese manager, who helped me launch my career. I worked on repertoire with top vocal coaches at the Metropolitan



Opera, and improved upon my natural vocal skills, perfecting my technique with a superb teacher. Although, at the time, my passion for opera was all-encompassing, it seems that destiny had something else in mind for me.

As a result of my experiences as a performer, I came to understand the importance of the face and the expressive muscles that allow us to communicate our inner feeling life to the world – on physical, emotional and spiritual levels. I realized that the face serves as a barometer of the health and well-being of the entire body, psyche and spirit.

Life then directed my footsteps to Japan and I lived in the Roppongi area of Tokyo, home to a large expatriate community, for 3 years!! I had a Japanese manager, who arranged recitals for me at some of the major concert halls, many of which were associated with the largest Japanese corporations, including Sony, et. al.

This is where acupuncture finally comes into the picture; one of my Japanese friends introduced me to an acupuncturist in Tokyo and I began a regular course of treatments. It was a miraculous experience, and opened my eyes to the potential of authentic transformation through this ancient healing art. I resolved that I would satisfy my emergent curiosity, and study acupuncture once I returned to New York City. I finally did fulfill this promise to myself!

Along the way, however, I also began to develop my skills as a healer by studying massage of various types, cranio-sacral therapy, and Shiatsu, and was introduced to polarity therapy, etc. Not bad for a girl from a tiny Midwestern town of only 3,000 people located near Lake Michigan!!

I was also intrigued by the idea of integrating acupuncture with sound therapy; this yearning finally found its fulfillment when MichelAngelo and I made a lengthy pilgrimage from southern Arizona to meet the Acutonics© “tuning fork ladies” at their Mothership base in the mountains north of Santa Fe, New Mexico. This system of vibrational medicine, based on the precepts of Chinese medicine, provided me with the vehicle that I needed to accomplish this integration of the two modalities. This was a natural development for a career musician.

### **What is Facial Acupuncture: Wakefield Technique™?**

The Wakefield Technique™ is the bedrock of my facial acupuncture treatments and derives its efficacy from a solid constitutional approach. It is crucial that a practitioner anchor their facial treatments, acupuncture or vibrational, with a constitutional treatment.



This constitutional strategy emphasizes the needling of three levels:

- a. Jing: Eight Extraordinary meridians (pre-natal Qi)
- b. Ying: 12 Regular meridians (post-natal Qi)
- c. Wei: "Ashi", trigger and motor points

The face is then needled, only after the Yang is thoroughly grounded by the constitutional treatment. Too many techniques of facial acupuncture that are taught worldwide focus only on facial needling, without anchoring that treatment with body points. These approaches are unnecessarily stressful for the patient, often giving rise to headaches, anxiety, and other imbalances.

An additional hallmark of The Wakefield Technique™ is the use of acu-muscle treatment points on the face; this approach, in effect, re-harmonizes the facial musculature, allowing it to return to an optimal state of balance.

20 different courses have been created under the umbrella of *Chi-Akra Center for Ageless Aging*, that introduce a myriad of constitutional and facial treatment protocols. The principal facial acu-muscle strategies feature the use of motor points, trigger points, the origin and insertion of the facial muscles, and paired antagonist/protagonists of those muscles.

These acu-muscle treatment protocols permit me, and my certified practitioners worldwide, to address more severe facial imbalances, such as post-operative neuropathies, Bell's palsy, windstroke, trigeminal neuralgia, temporo-mandibular joint dysfunction (TMJ), accidents, scars, and the aftermath of treatments for cancer (shifts in the buccinator muscles of the face).

I do not regard facial acupuncture as a superficial modality, and, for that reason, I do not refer to it as "cosmetic." Such a designation does a disservice to the profundity of facial acupuncture, which has a long tradition within the Chinese medicine field. Moreover, the term contributes to the formation of unrealistic expectations for potential patients, many of whom will, as a consequence, expect a "quick fix". This makes the process of education regarding facial acupuncture more challenging, as such patients will become obsessed about observing instantaneous results, rather than perceiving the overall impact of this modality on their general health and self-esteem.

*Constitutional Facial Acupuncture*™ is a natural organic treatment, one which achieves its excellent results in a course of treatments.



## What other services do you provide in your practice?

As a result of many years of experience, I have come to recognize that, while facial needling, particularly that employing acu-muscle points, is wonderfully efficacious, in and of itself, the incorporation of a topical component within a facial acupuncture treatment enhances results to a significant degree, on the order of 30 to 40 percent. To satisfy this requirement for proponents of The Wakefield Technique™ and others, I have formulated my own line of natural products, *Muse L' Herbal USA* – which includes Chinese herbal masks, 5 Element planetary and other essential oil blends, gem elixirs (vibrational remedies infused with the energy of gems), a Bulgarian rose cream, goat's milk cleanser, essential oil hydrosols, etc.

These topical components, in addition to their beneficial constitutional effects, likewise introduce an element of nurturance into the experience, rendering it somewhat less clinical for the patient. As previously noted, I utilize a synergy of modalities in the course of a treatment series, which similarly engenders a better result. I discern what the patient requires in that moment, using a variety of diagnostics.

I find that the most important thing for practitioner and patient is to remain grounded, which is accomplished by breathing deeply into the hara. Such an emphasis on breathing is a natural outgrowth of my many years as a singer. This practice is fundamental, and it fosters a lively sense of presence and being in the now! In my experience, that is when the healing happens.

## Where do you practice?

My practice is located on the Upper East Side of Manhattan, in New York City, at the following address:

Chi-Akra Center for Ageless Aging  
Mary Elizabeth Wakefield, L. Ac., M. S., Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM)  
250 East 63<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 607  
New York, NY 10065

I still have a landline telephone, 212-593-1954, and also an online voicemail, 888-652-5550. My two web sites are located at the following URLs:

*Chi-Akra Center for Ageless Aging:* [www.facialacupuncture-wakefieldtechnique.com](http://www.facialacupuncture-wakefieldtechnique.com)  
*Muse L' Herbal USA:* [www.muselherbalusa.com](http://www.muselherbalusa.com)



## What might someone be surprised to know about you?

While you might think that someone who spent a great deal of her life as a performer, who has latterly become a globe-trotting teacher, would be a complete extrovert, you might be surprised to learn that I have my introverted side. Consequently, I require a great deal of creative time for myself. I meditate daily, and I love trees! Wherever I am in the world, I find a tree that calls to me, one that has a special energy. I lean up against it, feel its Qi, and slip into a wordless, silent meditation.

## What do you do when you are not working?

When I am not treating patients, or teaching, I am usually embroiled in study. I have also written two books; the first, *Constitutional Facial Acupuncture*, currently rated 5-stars on Amazon, was published by Elsevier UK in 2014.

The latest, co-authored with MichelAngelo, is *Vibrational Acupuncture: Integrating Tuning Forks with Needles*, published by Singing Dragon UK in March 2020. It, too, is rated 5 stars on Amazon, and we hope to have an opportunity to promote it to our worldwide audience in person before too much more time elapses.

Writing is not really work; I am always taking notes, and jotting down ideas, and, for me, putting pen to paper is a vital expression of creativity, which is a joy!! I had never thought that I would be a writer when I was a child, but a workshop with the late Madeleine L' Engle, author of the famous children's book, *A Wrinkle in Time*, demonstrated for me that I had the potential to do so. I am confident that I have other books in me, which will emerge in time.

I also am an individual who needs regular contact with nature, so MichelAngelo and I walk in Central Park whenever we can. I practice Qi gong and Tai Chi, do kundalini yoga, sing, cook, create new dishes – I am the Queen of Leftovers!! I communicate with my friends and family, create new products and seminars, etc. One of the products of our long internment here in New York in recent months is our COVID-19 Survival Kit, which contains 4 Palliatives for Pandemic (two essential oil blends, a grounding/clearing spray, and a lovely organic no-rinse hand cleanser, that is gentle on the skin).

Between the facial acupuncture and the vibrational facial seminars, I have devised at least 20 different facial treatments. Teaching is most assuredly one of my passions, and the interaction, in our seminars, with knowledgeable and dynamic practitioners from



around the globe has enriched my life immeasurably in recent years. I look forward to the day when I may once again travel to connect with them. I regard them as my extended family, particularly the graduates of our three International GOLD STANDARD FACIAL ACUPUNCTURE® Certification Programs (a fourth launches in April 2021, and, thus far, we have practitioners from the US, UK, India, Singapore and Australia). The GOLD STANDARD Program is a 2-year masters level equivalency in facial acupuncture, which is unprecedented in its scope and philosophy; there is no other training program comparable anywhere in the world today.