



NCCAOM Featured PDA Provider: Dan Wunderlich

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NCCAOM PDA Provider #992
PDA Newsletter - January 2021 Issue

NCCAOM would like to congratulate NCCAOM Diplomate and PDA Provider **Dan Wunderlich** for his winning video submission in the NCCAOM/ ASA 2020 Acupuncture Medicine Day Video Contest. Dan's video entitled "*Bringing Acupuncture Medicine to the Underserved*" was selected as the winner in the Acupuncture Accessibility and Community Engagement category. The uplifting and inspiring video highlights the medical outreach work of Global Healthworks Foundation (GHF), the not-for-profit organization Dan founded. The video can be viewed using the following link: <https://tinyurl.com/GHFvideo>.

This year's annual celebration encouraged participants to reflect on the impact acupuncture treatments have within our local and international communities regarding how acupuncture practitioners can "*be the voice, be the bridge, be the change*" for healing in our hurting world. With its authentic volunteer commentaries and patient testimonials attesting to the far-reaching impact on more than 56,000 underserved patients, the winning video truly represents the acupuncture profession at its best!

Question 1: You became an NCCAOM PDA Provider in March of 2011. What inspired you to apply to become a PDA Provider?

I love teaching and sharing my skills and expertise with other practitioners. I teach contemporary acupuncture material often lacking from the conventional classroom setting, so it complements the more typical foundation coursework. I enjoy being able



to give practitioners additional tools they can consider using when treating patients. Hopefully, this added knowledge improves their treatment outcomes.

Secondly, and more importantly, I became a PDA Provider to supplement the donation revenue stream to the not-for-profit organization I founded called Global Healthworks Foundation (GHF). All my teaching revenues are donated directly to GHF. Consistent with the Foundation's tagline of "*Be Well. Know More.*", my love for teaching is a heartfelt exchange of knowledge for the betterment of our patients' wellbeing.

When practitioners attend my seminars, I am confident they gain useful skills they can immediately apply in their clinical practice. And it's an added bonus to be able to express my gratitude for their direct financial support of our Foundation's outreach work.

Question 2: What would you tell someone who is thinking about applying to become a PDA Provider with NCCAOM?

I may be biased toward my own teaching style and learning preference, but I would encourage new PDA Providers to select material that is both relevant and practical. I'd also highlight the importance of creating a curriculum that efficiently combines multiple teaching methods, such as lectures, clinical demonstrations, and supervised workshops, with plenty of hands-on practice sessions. Lastly, my seminar participants often share that they appreciate the extra attention provided by skilled Teaching Assistants, especially during our practical sessions.

Question 3: Why do you think PDA Providers are important to the acupuncture and Oriental medicine profession?

Continuing education and professional development is important in all health fields. Our industry is continuously evolving, and with medical advances and new technologies, it is critical our healthcare professionals stay up-to-date with best practices. Even with an ancient medicine like acupuncture, there is always more we can learn and integrate into our treatments to ensure we remain at the top of our game and provide safe, effective, and high-quality patient care.



Question 4: Your PDA approved courses are centered around neurofunctional acupuncture. What is neurofunctional acupuncture?

Fundamentally, the practice of neurofunctional acupuncture is based on a contemporary biomedical understanding of how acupuncture works from a neurophysiology and neuroanatomical perspective. That is, our bodies produce measurable physiological responses when fine, solid acupuncture needles are inserted into anatomically defined innervated areas of the body for therapeutic purposes. Neurofunctional acupuncture modulates abnormal activity of the nervous system and/or endocrine, exocrine, and immune systems. It has very useful applications when treating musculoskeletal pain syndromes, functional problems, and many diseases in which these modulatory mechanisms are available.

Neurofunctional acupuncture uses the tenets of best evidence practice to achieve successful treatment outcomes. I have a deep understanding of these Western-based principles and am passionate about their effectiveness. I teach these concepts to health professionals who treat musculoskeletal pain and dysfunction in a Canadian medical school as part of its Advanced Continuing Education program. However, I don't discount the important fundamentals of my East Asian Medicine background. On the contrary, I believe I am a better practitioner because I can easily integrate Eastern and Western concepts and effectively utilize a wide variety of treatment modalities. Often, I treat with the intention to both "*harmonize the free movement of Qi and Blood*" and "*neuromodulate excessive nociceptive signaling from the injured area at the peripheral-segmental, spinal-segmental, and supra-segmental levels of the nervous system.*" Take my seminar to know what that means!

Question 5: How did you get interested in neurofunctional acupuncture?

I have always had an analytical mind. From as far back as I can remember, I was always asking "Why?". I wanted to know more. Before my current professional work as an acupuncturist and manual medicine practitioner, I used these analytical skills in a rewarding career in finance and technology consulting. Over time, I developed one of my key strengths—my pattern recognition skills—which proved useful as I switched careers and began learning the poetic, empirical patterns and principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). At the same time, I kept looking analytically for the explanations and "evidence" of how classical acupuncture works. Even during my initial TCM training, I was investigating evidence-based coursework to learn biomedical principles of acupuncture mechanisms. I enrolled in the McMaster

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University Contemporary Medical Acupuncture Program and eventually became a Senior Clinical Preceptor in that same program.

When one studies the soft-tissue fascial connectivity planes in the human body, along with the peripheral nervous system, it's evident that there are various analogous intersections between these anatomical systems and the Traditional Chinese Meridian system. To me, it is not far-fetched to augment our traditional knowledge base with these contemporary neurofunctional concepts.

Among my greatest blessings was being part of an elite team of instructors selected to train U.S. military doctors in the application of these contemporary acupuncture methods used to treat wounded soldiers.

Question 6: Where do you practice? What other services do you provide in your practice?

My private practice is located in New York City. Since 2007 I have also regularly led teams of volunteer practitioners on humanitarian outreach projects domestically and internationally.

When I treat a patient, whether in my private practice or as part of our medical missions in underserved communities, the services I provide are always the same. I combine a comprehensive set of treatment modalities, including acupuncture, *Zheng Gu Tui Na* (a system of corrective soft-tissue therapeutic bodywork and bone mobilizations), and at-home, self-care instructions, such as body-movement stretches and exercises. Additionally, my treatments frequently include Chinese herbal remedies and/or natural medicinal supplements, as well as other nutritional and life-style counseling.

Question 7: You are the founder of the Global Healthworks Foundation. Tell us about the Foundation and the people and communities it serves.

Global Healthworks Foundation (GHF) is a volunteer-based, charitable 501(c)3 organization that provides high-quality, cost-free healthcare services to medically underserved communities domestically and internationally. In the United States, our skilled practitioners serve in community-based outreach clinics providing treatments to



war veterans, recovery patients, and people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHAs). Internationally, our practitioners have treated indigenous communities in remote villages of Indonesia, Nepal, and Guatemala. These communities are considered remote due to their geographic, socioeconomic, or political positioning. In the last six years, our volunteers have treated more than 56,000 patients!

Typically, our healthcare services include acupuncture, Chinese herbal remedies, therapeutic soft-tissue bodywork, Reiki energy healing, rehabilitative body movement exercises (e.g., qigong, yoga), and nutritional and lifestyle counseling. In addition to direct patient care, Global Healthworks Foundation works to train local health advocates in the communities we serve to empower them with tools for sustainable health. Our website (www.GlobalHealthworksFoundation.org) has a great media gallery of images and short videos that describes our healthworks in more depth.

During the current global pandemic, the Foundation initiated a COVID-19 response initiative to deliver “Quarantine Kits” to families in need in rural Guatemala. The kits were designed to minimize the effect of the pandemic on families and contained healthy food staples, face masks, natural plant medicines, and instruction materials about prevention of and response to the spread of the coronavirus. GHF’s local, on-the-ground Mobile Clinic Team was able to safely create and deliver the Quarantine Kits following strict physical distancing and sanitation guidelines.

The Foundation has a slogan which emphasizes our healthcare delivery model: *“Shifting Healthcare With Kindness and Compassion.”* To us, kindness has the power to change the world. It brings people together. I am incredibly proud of the healthcare practitioners who volunteer with GHF—including more than 50 fellow NCCOM Diplomates! Each GHF volunteer is a true catalyst for change on a global level.

But volunteering on an international medical mission isn’t the only way practitioners can *“give back.”* We can share our powerful medicine with those in need anywhere, including individuals without access to conventional healthcare in our own backyards and local communities in a cost-free or sliding-scale clinic or similar volunteer offering.

Question 8: What might someone be surprised to know about you?

I have a mirror identical twin. I am right-handed, and he is left-handed. I can only wink with my left eye. He can only wink with his right eye! ;-)



Question 9: What do you do when you are not working?

Sleep! Anyone who knows me, knows I am always working. That's because I love what I do! I love practicing "good medicine" and providing medical outreach work to help others. And I love teaching! I live in a great city and have enjoyed a weekend beach house for a long time, with a partner of 35+ years and a beautiful rescue greyhound named Paloma. I love traveling and sharing life experiences on a local level with all those I meet. Life can't get better than this!