

The Alternative Clinic

Clinical Observation Program

Chinese medicine was traditionally learned through teacher-disciple relationships, immersing the next generation of practitioners in day to day clinical practice with old and experienced doctors. An old doctor required discipline, diligence, and maturity from the younger generation in order to accept them as a student and welcome them into their clinic, as the endeavor to teach and mentor was not undertaken lightly. It is only through observing and assisting treatment for a wide variety of ailments over an extended period of time one gains confidence and skill. Teachers were in charge of determining when the student's training was sufficient to *xing yi* 行醫; leave mentorship to begin private practice. This process may take many years. The importance of this type of learning and relationship cannot be underestimated.

Today, most educational programs do not have older, skilled practitioners who treat, explain, and struggle with difficult cases in front of students as a tool for learning and competency. First or second year students often follow third or fourth year students in the clinic. This lack of meaningful clinical training under experienced practitioners leaves graduates enormously in debt without the training they need to be effective or successful. As of 2022, statistics show 50% of graduates of Chinese medicine programs are not in practice 5 years post-graduation. The current state of formally organized education in the classroom and in the clinical setting leads to a disparagingly low quality of practice, and lack of true understanding of Chinese medicine, which greatly affects reputation and public opinion.

As part of our mission to raise the bar of clinically focused Chinese medicine in the West, The Alternative Clinic offers short term observation and four week immersion programs at The Alternative Clinic in Asheville, North Carolina. Licensed practitioners may sign up to observe acupuncture, bodywork and herbs deftly and flexibly applied for a wide variety of chronic and acute cases, and benefit from end of day discussion on treatment and strategy with seasoned practitioners and enthusiastic teachers. Teaching to others, as they have taught to us, senior practitioners JulieAnn and Andrew Nugent-Head weave naturalistic perspectives with utter practicality into tangible and effective Chinese medicine treatments.

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Who are my teachers?

Observers will be following Andrew Nugent-Head (MSOM) and JulieAnn Nugent-Head (MD, MSOM). Andrew spent 28 years in China learning in traditional mentor-disciple relationships under Wang Jinhui, Xie Pieqi and Li Hongxiang, while JulieAnn spent 8.5 years in China studying with traditional teachers Li Hongxiang, Chen Tongyun as well as doctorate studies at the Zhejiang University of Chinese Medicine, Hangzhou, China and mentorship under doctoral advisor Wen Chenping.

Who can attend?

Weekly and four week observation is open to licensed practitioners, or students of Chinese medicine *who are earning externship credits*.

Is this approved for continuing education credit?

Yes! The NCCAOM grants 10 hours of total clinical observation hours to be applied to recertification requirement as a professional development activity. For international practitioners, please confirm CE requirements with your country's governing boards.

What does the program cost?

Weekly observation is \$1000. Payment must be made at time of booking and is non-refundable unless cancelled by the clinic due to circumstances beyond its control. Payment is due in full at time of booking. Four week programs receive a \$1000 discount on the weekly rate. Dates must be contiguous to receive the four week discount.

What does the program look like?

Observers will observe patients Monday through Thursday, with Andrew Nugent-Head for two days each week, and JulieAnn Nugent-Head for two days. The day begins at 9:00am with a brief introduction to the day's patients, and treatments continuing every 40 minutes through the day. End of day case discussion with Andrew or JulieAnn will answer questions to clarify treatments & formulas.

Application Process:

Observation is limited. To sign up, please send an e-mail with requested dates of attendance to confirm availability.

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Travel:

Asheville airport (AVL) is 15 minutes from town and very easy to navigate. However, as a small airport, flights are more expensive than flying into Greenville or Charlotte. For international flights, connecting through Newark or Chicago will offer a direct flight into Asheville.

Accommodations:

The clinic is in the heart of downtown on the south slope. The city is hilly, but quite walkable. Numerous premium hotels are available within walking distance to the clinic. West Asheville and East Asheville have many airbnb choices, but will require car / bike or uber service.

Parking:

There is limited parking in the downtown area. Metered street parking in downtown has a two hour time limit and is strictly enforced. Parking garages in the downtown area are available for \$12 per day. There are a number of free parking lots in town, city development permitting. Our front desk staff will be happy to answer any parking or logistic questions you may have.

Personal Belongings Storage:

We have very limited storage. Please minimize what you bring to the clinic.

Shift Times:

Treatment hours are typically 9 - 4:30pm, however JulieAnn and Andrew often see patients before or after clinic hours and during lunch. Please plan to arrive at the clinic by 8:30 am to get settled and have a brief introduction to cases. If clinic hours are extended, they will let you know if the cases warrant coming early or staying late. Lunch break is typically from 12:45-1:30pm. There are quick lunch and snack options in downtown, but we recommend bringing a packed lunch for convenience. We do not have facilities to refrigerate or heat up food. We do ask that you dispose of any food waste in the garbage cans **outside of the clinic** to minimize aromas in the treatment area.

Hygiene:

Please be aware of personal hygiene, come to the clinic clean and showered, and do not apply strong essential oils or perfumes.

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Clinic Dress Code:

We are a medical clinic. Please dress as a professional medical care provider with clean and pressed clothing. No exceptions. If you arrive improperly attired, you will not be permitted to observe.

- Men: business casual black collared shirt, khaki, black or grey pants and closed toe shoes. Hoodies and t-shirts are not acceptable. In winter sweaters or jackets should also be solid black or dark in color.
- Women: business casual black top, black or khaki pants and conservative jewelry. Closed toe black shoes. In winter, sweaters or cover-ups should also be solid black or dark in color.

Conduct:

We work to ensure that your time at The Alternative Clinic is a rare and valuable learning experience. However, we do ask you maintain quiet observation. It is often inappropriate to answer questions while in the treatment room and in front of the patient.

If the practitioner is chatting with a patient in a casual manner, that does not invite you to join in the conversation. If you have comments or questions, write them down. If you feel you have beneficial suggestions, diagnoses or treatment strategies for practitioner or patient, please keep them to yourself. Please remember that the patients are in our clinic to see clinic practitioners, not visiting students. If you feel we are missing something or you have a solution you feel we have overlooked, or experience you feel is valuable, we still ask that you to blend into the background and stay silent. We discuss cases at the end of the day and will provide you with time to ask questions or offer comments.

Please turn off your cell phone and store with your belongings. While it may seem acceptable to utilize the phone to look up points and herbs, looking at your phone conveys an image of non-professionalism to practitioner and patient. If you feel you need to take notes, paper and pen is preferable.

Please consider completing a clinic reflection sheet, included as the last page of this document. It is helpful for us to hear your feedback in order for us to improve the program for others.

I have read and accept these guidelines for my clinical training while at the Alternative Clinic. Please sign this form and return to the clinic.

Signed By _____ Date _____

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Clinic Observation Reflections

We believe that Chinese medicine can and should be both common sense and effective across a wide range of illness. We hope that we have fulfilled these expectations, and created a valuable training program for you. While not required, we do hope you will take the time to write down or film your thoughts on being in our clinic, to assist us in improving the experience as well as to better inform others on what to expect. We have created a list of questions below as a guideline, but you are certainly welcome to write any comments or observations you feel are helpful. You are welcome to write thoughts in your native language.

Part 01 – A brief description of yourself

- where are you from
- how long have you been in practice
- what kind of previous training you have had
- have you taken any courses from JulieAnn / Andrew before, and have they affected your practice

Part 02 – Your experience in the clinic

- impression of the range of illnesses and diversity of patients coming in
- impression of quality of treatments given
- explanations of treatment decisions and patient cases
- what was most interesting to you
- what was most surprising to you
- do you feel you will be able to integrate what you have seen at The Alternative Clinic into your practice

Part 03 – General impressions of the program

- how was organizing your clinical training dates and payment?
- how helpful was the staff once you arrived?
- how was your experience in Asheville?
- what more would you want from this program?
- any advice for future observers?