

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

University of Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine partners with Maricopa County on innovative integrative primary care clinic

Clinical study will allow Center to open discussions of insurance coverage

PHOENIX, Ariz., Nov. 28 – The University of Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine (AzCIM) today announced a partnership with Maricopa County that will allow thousands of employees to receive world-class integrative health care and will produce statistically relevant data on its effect on patients’ health.

Thanks to a grant from the Adolph Coors Foundation, the AzCIM, a Center of Excellence at the University of Arizona College of Medicine – Tucson and a leader in medical education, will study the impact of integrative primary care delivered at a new clinic slated to open in Phoenix in July 2012.

The Phoenix Integrative Primary Care Clinic, as part of the UA College of Medicine-Phoenix, will allow AzCIM to study the health- and cost-effectiveness of integrative versus conventional medicine in Maricopa County’s 13,000 employee system. Medical outcomes will be compared between the patients receiving conventional medical care and those receiving integrative care.

“We believe this is the first step toward changing priorities of reimbursement, away from disease management and dependence on costly pharmaceutical drugs and other high-tech interventions, and toward sustainable wellness,” said Andrew Weil, MD, AzCIM founder and director, UA professor of medicine and public health and Jones-Lovell Professor of Integrative Rheumatology.

During the three-year study, clinic leadership will work closely with Maricopa County and CIGNA, the claims administrator and network provider. The Phoenix Integrative Primary Care Clinic will serve 1500 Maricopa County employees in the first year.

Study results will be used to open conversations on a national level about insurance reimbursement for integrative health-care services, wellness and prevention. The long-term goal is to influence health-care policy regarding best outcomes and cost.

Maricopa County employees and Phoenix residents will receive the highest level of integrative health care, including preventive and lifestyle medicine, in the treatment of new and existing health conditions.

Integrative medicine is a blend of conventional Western medicine and complementary therapies. AzCIM defines it as healing-oriented medicine that considers the whole person, including all aspects of lifestyle. It emphasizes the therapeutic relationship between practitioner and patient, is informed by evidence and makes use of all appropriate therapies.

“Our strength at the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine is our dedication of human capital and medical and intellectual resources to transform health care worldwide,” Dr. Weil notes.

“Given the current health-care cost spiral and obesity crisis in the United States, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors has decided to make preventive integrative care and treatment options more accessible to our employees,” says David Smith, Maricopa County manager. “In partnership with the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine, we have created a special benefit structure for patients to access the services of the Phoenix Integrative Primary Care Clinic.”

About the Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine

The Arizona Center for Integrative Medicine (AzCIM) is leading the transformation of health care by creating, educating and actively supporting a community that embodies the philosophy and practice of healing-oriented medicine, addressing mind, body and spirit. Integrative medicine takes account of all lifestyle factors that influence health and makes use of conventional and alternative therapies, as appropriate. Since its inception, the AzCIM has focused its efforts on three areas: education, clinical care and research, with the primary emphasis on education. AzCIM was built on the premise that the best way to change a field is to educate the most gifted professionals and place them in settings where they can teach others. To learn more about the AzCIM, please visit www.azcim.org

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