

Melissa Pulicicchio, L.Ac, M.S., Acupuncturist and Founder of Aviva Acupuncture

Get to know Acupuncturist Melissa Pulicicchio, L.Ac, who serves patients in Honolulu, Hawaii.



New York City, New York Nov 22, 2022 ([Issuewire.com](https://www.issuewire.com)) - Elected Woman Top Acupuncturist in Honolulu, Melissa is the Founder of Aviva Acupuncture, which she opened in June 2020. She specializes in women's health, fertility, tobacco cessation, and pain management.

With more than 10 years of experience as a healthcare practitioner and degrees in Acupuncture, Traditional Chinese Medicine, and Psychology in addition to certifications in Yoga and Ayurvedic Medicine, she brings a uniquely comprehensive background to her practice, which allows her to treat each patient as a whole. This mind-body approach often leaves her patients amazed by the effectiveness of her treatment. Whereby, Melissa humbly attributes her ability to assist her patients in the healing process to “bringing each patient’s mind and body into balance, as it is this equilibrium that makes healing inevitable.” As she explains, “until recently there was a general resistance towards acupuncture in the western medical community, mostly because there was a scarcity of research that could explain the mechanism of action, despite the undeniable effectiveness. Whereas, recent studies have shown that acupuncture functions indirectly by attenuating the autonomic nervous system and improving blood flow.” As she reports that it is an exciting time to be an acupuncturist with the inclusion of acupuncture in the ICD-11 in 2019, which is the gold standard that hospitals and healthcare providers around the world use to instruct their services provided, which she feels marks the acceptance of acupuncture as an effective treatment by the western healthcare community. However, she also feels that the benefits of acupuncture are only beginning to be explored, as she says “acupuncture is not only an effective form of treatment for mental illness, chronic diseases, quitting smoking and fertility, but it is also extremely cost-effective, as health insurers and the healthcare system, in general, could reduce costs by encouraging its use in the integrative healthcare framework.” As she exclaims that there are many expensive surgeries and pharmaceutical regimens that could be avoided with acupuncture while improving the quality of life of the patients. However, she does not consider acupuncture to be a replacement therapy, as she emphasizes the importance of healthcare practitioners in every field working together in a more collaborative manner to tackle the insurmountable healthcare challenges that we face today. As she concludes, “the toxins and contagions present in the world today certainly make achieving and maintaining a healthy mind-body equilibrium increasingly difficult. While acupuncture does provide effective treatment for certain healthcare problems, this effectiveness is based on the acupuncturist’s ability to see the entire clinical picture of a given patient, which is where mental health therapists, primary care providers, specialists, and diagnostic technologies make essential contributions to the curative process of each individual.”

Melissa has gone to great lengths in her pursuit of the knowledge that she felt was necessary to provide her patients with the care they need. Although, her journey to her current status as a Top Doctor was all but typical. A few years after earning her Bachelor of Science Degree in Psychology from Universidade São Marcos in 2005, she found herself working as an HR executive at one of the world’s largest banks. However, she was not just any HR executive; she was tasked with overseeing the bank’s workers with disabilities program, which was required to hire thousands of disabled workers on a yearly basis. As she says, “recruiting individuals with disabilities, some of which were blind or had down syndrome to work at a bank, gave me a unique perspective on how physical illness or disabilities can be truly limiting, as it gave me a profound sense of empathy. While it also inspired me, to see how these individuals, despite their limitations, courageously overcame their impediments with a grateful smile.” It was at this time that Melissa’s own health came to the forefront, as she was diagnosed with a thyroid disorder in addition to a series of healthcare complaints that her western healthcare providers could not explain the origin of. As she recalls, “none of my doctors could tell me why I was experiencing such extreme fatigue and why everything and anything I would eat would make me sick.” Looking back, she attributes part of her poor health condition at the time to the *toxic corporate work environment* that she was in; however, this situation caused her to pursue **A Better Way**. This is when she was introduced to Acupuncture (and Traditional Chinese Medicine) and Ayurveda, which gave her a profound paradigm shift. As she comically explains, “my conventional doctors were in other words saying that ‘we can’t explain what is going on with you - therefore, you are crazy;’ while my acupuncturist and ayurvedic physician provided an explanation that made sense and more importantly, their treatment worked. For example, conventional medicine leads us to believe that allergies to certain things in our environment are

something that we are born with and will have for the rest of our lives; while the eastern healthcare providers explained that I was experiencing these allergic reactions because my body was out of equilibrium. That is, when I did the allergen panel at the hospital, it showed that I was in fact allergic to just about everything, however, the concept of changing what I was allergic to, by putting my organism back into balance was unfathomable to my western doctor.” This experience was so life-changing in terms of her health and her outlook on society in general that she devised a plan to escape her burgeoning corporate HR career and began studying acupuncture and Ayurveda in the evenings. It was not easy maintaining her demanding corporate position while earning her Certificate in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine from Instituto de Terapia Integrada e Oriental, which she completed in 2012. However, she never looked back after receiving her calling, as she was steadfast in becoming a healthcare provider that could help others overcome the physical impediments that she did. During this time period, she also earned her certification in Yoga and Ayurvedic Medicine, which she studied in India. As she explains, “a little-known fact is that acupuncture actually originated from Ayurveda in India, which is why I felt the need to study Ayurveda in addition to Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine.” She then went on to earn her Master’s Degree in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine from the Institute of Clinical Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine in 2020 in Honolulu, Hawaii. As she adds, “I am grateful for having had the opportunity to study Acupuncture from ITIO in Brazil, which focused on the Japanese form of Acupuncture, ICAOM in Hawaii, which was more oriented towards the Chinese approach and the Ayurvedic perspective while interning at an Ayurvedic Hospital in India; which has provided me with a profound understanding of the powerful forces in our body that are the source of acupuncture’s efficacy.

In addition to her years of experience practicing acupuncture in Brazil and the US, while studying for her Master’s Degree she worked as a Smoking Cessation Specialist at Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center. As she points out that acupuncture’s ability to treat addiction, including smoking cessation, which is considered to be one of the most addictive vices, is both extremely effective and underused. That is, she believes acupuncture could be saving thousands of lives and saving the healthcare system millions of dollars in lung cancer treatment if more people were aware of its effectiveness. As she elaborates in regards to acupuncture’s ability to effectively treat addiction that “Acupuncture in collaboration with a multidisciplinary approach, also presents a solution to the opioid crisis, in its ability to effectively treat pain and decrease the level of anxiety associated with withdrawals.” As she notes Acupuncture is the only scientifically proven treatment for many types of pain that has no known side effects.

At the Aviva Acupuncture Clinic, which has three locations on the Island of Oahu, Hawaii (Kahala, Pearl City, and Nanakuli), Melissa treats patients with a wide variety of ailments, including, but not limited to joint pain (i.e. knee, back and shoulder injuries), chronic illness, mental health concerns (such as PTSD, Anxiety Disorders and ADHD), smoking cessation, pain management, rehabilitation from workplace and auto accidents, fertility and women’s health. Whereby, fertility treatment and women’s health she considers to be her core specialization as she affirms “for me, there is no greater endeavor than to empower women by helping them achieve their most vibrant self and nothing more powerful than assisting them to give life.”

Melissa is currently active in developing a multidisciplinary team across the Island of Oahu, where she seeks to collaborate with healthcare providers of other disciplines in order to improve the quality of care and life of each patient. To this end, she will be a speaker at the upcoming healthcare conference in Honolulu, Hawaii, where she will be discussing how acupuncture and a structured nutritional diet can be applied as a combination therapy for the treatment of anxiety. Whereby, this form of treatment is a result of her collaborative work with the renowned educational and nutritional psychologist Karla Garjaka, who will be co-presenting with her. As she notes “according to Traditional Chinese Medicine, all illness

originates in the mind, which western science is only now starting to comprehend as insights into the inner workings of the endocrine system are beginning to be understood. Therefore, as an acupuncturist, it is our job not only to treat the physical ailments presented but to also treat the anxiety that is so prevalent in today's society."

Melissa is certified through the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM) and is a Licensed Acupuncturist in the State of Hawaii. The NCCAOM is a non-profit organization in the United States that aims to "establish, assess, and promote recognized standards of competence and safety in acupuncture and Oriental medicine for the protection and benefit of the public." She is also a member of the Hawaii Acupuncture Association.

Melissa is accepting new patients at the Aviva Acupuncture Clinics on the Island of Oahu, which has three locations - Kahala (near Honolulu), Pearl City, and Nanakuli (Leeward). At these locations she offers acupuncture treatment, cupping, moxibustion, and TCM-based herbal therapy; while other practitioners that she works in collaboration with offer chiropractic and massage therapy. In 2023, she is looking forward to establishing additional partnerships with healthcare providers from other disciplines, in particular, OBGYNs and Mental Health Therapists. Her contact information can be found below, as she is always eager to receive new patients with a welcoming smile, as she truly embodies the aloha spirit and cares for all those she treats, which is why she is a Top Doctor.

Learn More about Melissa Pulicicchio ,L.Ac., M.S.:

Through her findatopdoc profile,

<https://www.findatopdoc.com/doctor/84831341-Melissa-Pulicicchio-Acupuncturist> by emailing her at Mel@AvivaAcu.com or by accessing the website of the Aviva Acupuncture Clinic at www.AvivaAcupuncture.com.

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