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Chanda Plan Foundation's Holistic Therapies Help Participant Beat Opioid Addiction

Julie Farrar, now opioid-free for more than a year, says acupuncture, massage and other alternative therapies have been "life changing"

DENVER – According to [STAT](#), there are now nearly 100 deaths a day from opioids. The most recent national statistics count more than 33,000 opioid-related deaths across the U.S. in 2015. Most of the forecasts produced by STAT predict the annual death toll will increase by at least 35 percent between 2015 and 2027.

Julie Farrar, a healthcare policy analyst and paraplegic, has first-hand experience with opioid addiction and found a way to beat the addiction and change her life with integrative therapies provided by the [Chanda Plan Foundation](#), a non-profit organization dedicated to providing access to

acupuncture, massage, chiropractic, yoga, adaptive exercise, primary care, and other complementary services to improve health outcomes for persons with physical disabilities. Farrar was born without the bottom 12 vertebra in her spine and has been a paraplegic her entire life, using a wheelchair full-time since she was a teenager.

“The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that the amount of prescription opioids sold to pharmacies, hospitals and doctor’s offices quadrupled from 1999 to 2010,” said Farrar. “The way we treat addiction is really bad. It should not be this way. Holistic therapies directly address this crisis and help you to understand yourself, allowing you to take control of what you can take control of.”

According to Dr. Daniel Drennan, Pain Specialist, “Chronic opioid usage and misuse has become an epidemic and a national emergency in the United States. Management of chronic pain with opiate medications leads not only to addiction and dependency, but also immune suppression, bone demineralization and weakness, testosterone depletion, chronic fatigue, the loss of tooth enamel, and numerous other medical complications. The use of integrative, multimodal, and alternative therapies leads to better pain relief and outcomes, and should always be an integral component to pain treatment. The Chanda Plan Foundation is offering the options everyone should have and the best part is that there are no life threatening side-effects to what they provide.”

As a busy mom with three daughters, Farrar is active and always on the go. About eight years ago, she suffered a rotator cuff injury – a very common occurrence for people who use wheelchairs. After seeing a sports rehabilitation doctor, she was prescribed a number of opioid pain medications. Julie found these medications to be unbearable and not effective for her active lifestyle, so she stopped taking them. However, without the pain medication, she was incapacitated. She lost her job, couldn’t leave the house and was suicidal, the pain was so debilitating.

After visiting with her primary care physician, she was prescribed a different mixture of low dose opioids. She still felt her cognitive functioning was not as high as she would have hoped; however, she took them successfully at their lowest dose for almost four years before having further pain issues that required her to increase her dosage.

After experiencing an adverse reaction to an anti-depressant due to the opioid mixture, she went to see her doctor again. A very in-tune physician's assistant was able to diagnose her immediately with Serotonin Toxicity Syndrome, a potentially life-threatening condition that can occur when taking medications that causes high levels of serotonin to accumulate in the body.

Julie immediately went off all medication, suffering severe withdrawal and angst. That is when she turned to acupuncture, massage, yoga and meditation provided by the Chanda Plan Foundation. Using these complementary integrative therapies, Julie has reclaimed her life and been opioid free for a year and a half.

According to Julie, "These holistic therapies have been absolutely life changing. I am not on any medication. Not enough words can express how grateful I am for the Chanda Plan. Integrative and complementary therapy has worked so well and improved my life. This is a melding of Eastern and Western therapies – emphasizing the balance between treating your mind and your body."

"Julie was at her wits' end when I first met her," said Chanda Hinton Leichtle, Founder and Executive Director of the Chanda Plan Foundation. Although she was off opioids, the angst and uncomfortable feelings were still making it difficult for her to have a full and happy life. Access to integrative therapies has made a significant impact in her life, and I am just glad we exist as an organization to help. The opioid epidemic is tragic for persons with long-term disabilities because pain is such a prevalent secondary condition, and it's easy to give someone a pill. However, as the government makes efforts to reduce it, other options need to be made accessible. The medical system that simply provides pain medication on top of pain medication is broken. This is especially pertinent to those with physical disabilities."

The Chanda Plan Foundation recently opened the Chanda Center for Health in Lakewood, Colo., in April. The Center provides a holistic, person-centered approach that includes care coordination and behavioral health services, as well as integrated therapies such as massage, chiropractic services, acupuncture and adaptive yoga. The center will also soon offer primary care.

Chanda Hinton Leichtle and her sister, Crystal Hinton, established the nonprofit Chanda Plan Foundation in 2005 after Hinton Leichtle experienced significant health improvements through the use of integrative therapies for symptoms caused by a spinal cord injury. The results of an integrated approach to treatment include reduced pain and the need for pain medication, lessened time spent at medical visits, and increased hours engaged in community or work.

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About the Chanda Plan Foundation

The Chanda Plan Foundation is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing access to integrative therapy, primary care, and other complementary services to improve health outcomes and reduce healthcare costs for persons with physical disabilities. The Foundation was established in 2005 by Chanda Hinton Leichtle and her sister, Crystal Hinton, and serves persons with symptoms of spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, spina bifida, and brain injuries, and offers integrated therapies including adaptive exercise, adaptive yoga, massage, acupuncture, and chiropractic as well as care coordination and behavioral health services. The Chanda Plan Foundation's person-focused Chanda Center for Health opened in April of 2017, and is the first of its kind, providing a single point of service for the health needs of persons with long-term physical disabilities. For additional information on the Chanda Plan Foundation, visit www.iamtheplan.org.

About Comprehensive Pain Specialists

Comprehensive Pain Specialists is the only truly integrated multi-disciplinary pain clinic in Colorado. The group practices evidence-based medicine providing care per scientific literature instead of for profit. A board-certified anesthesiologist with fellowship training and board certification in chronic pain management, Dr. Daniel Drennan has an extensive background treating patients, teaching residents and providing

his specialty services to outside interest groups to improve the lives of those living with chronic pain.

“We are passionate about what we do because we assist patients in returning to work and life,” says Drennan. “As the only integrated multi-disciplinary pain clinic, we improve patient’s lives, decrease pain, and decrease narcotic consumption.” Comprehensive Pain Specialists stands apart from other similar practices because, “all of our physicians are fellowship-trained, double board-certified in anesthesiology/physiatry and pain management. We provide integrated care with MDs, chiropractic, physical therapy and pain psychology services.”

Comprehensive Pain Specialists is currently taking new patients and has multiple locations in the Denver area.