

HEALTH

U of C doctor wins Rogers Prize

Award recognizes work in complementary medicine

Dr. Marja Verhoef is the 2011 winner of the \$250,000 Dr. Rogers Prize for Excellence in Complementary and Alternative Medicine, which was awarded by the John and Lotte Hecht Memorial Foundation of Vancouver on Friday at the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel.

Verhoef holds Canada's only research chair in complementary medicine, at the University of Calgary. She has been a driving force behind the establishment of several Canadian networks promoting and enabling partnerships among those interested in complementary, alternative and integrative medicine. The most well known of these is the IN-CAM (Canadian Interdisciplinary Network on Complementary and Alternative Medicine) network, a virtual organization sparking collaboration among researchers and practitioners in Canada and internationally, which she helped to develop with Dr. Heather Boon.

"I grew up receiving treatment and care from a physician-homeopath and

realized not until much later that this was uncommon and unacceptable in many parts of the world," Verhoef said.

Verhoef and her husband, Peter Dankers, immigrated to Ottawa from Holland in 1978, then moved to Calgary.

Her degrees in sociology, psychology and epidemiology enabled her to collaborate across many disciplines. "Collaborating is crucial to the CAM field. It is not useful to all go our own direction. Networks are a great avenue to collaborate, share information, establish research teams and be responsive to practitioners, the public and patients' needs," she said.

Verhoef intends to use the prize money to improve the quality of CAM research and the training opportunities for practitioners as well as PhD students.

Dr. Roger H. Rogers created the Centre for Integrated Therapies in Vancouver in the early 1990s to help people who had no further conventional cancer treatment options.