



Gordon Rogers presents Dr. Marja Verhoef with the Dr. Rogers 2011 Prize.

The Dr. Roger's Prize (www.drrogersprize.org) highlights the important contributions of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) to healthcare by rewarding the pioneers who have made significant contributions to the field. This year's \$250,000 prize was awarded to University of Calgary's Dr. Marja Verhoef, Canada's only Research Chair in Complementary Medicine.

Dr. Verhoef and her husband, Peter Dankers, emigrated to Ottawa from Holland in 1978 to take advantage of a career opportunity for Peter. "I grew up receiving treatment and care from a physician-homeopath and

Roger's Prize winner

Dr. Verhoef a driving force

realized much later this was uncommon and unacceptable in many parts of the world."

Another academic opportunity brought them to the University of Calgary where they settled and had their two sons. Dr. Verhoef's interest in CAM was sparked when Dr. Sutherland, a gastroenterologist, asked her to study his patients' use of complementary and alternative therapies. The results showed much more use than had been suspected. Dr. Verhoef played around the edges of the field with studies on the uses of CAM for various diseases, but jumped in with both feet with a survey of MDs attitudes towards CAM use. During these formative years, she gathered other scientists and graduate students and encouraged them to study the area. 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 and not much fun to all go our own direction. We need to collaborate to develop and promote the field of CAM research and education to enhance the quality and impact of our work. Networks are a great avenue to collaborate, share information, establish research teams and be responsive to practitioners, the public and patients' needs," Verhoef says.

Dr. Verhoef 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 (IM). The most well known of these is the IN-CAM network, a virtual organization sparking collaboration among researchers and practitioners in Canada, North America and internationally.

The awarding of the 2011 Dr. Roger's Prize to Dr. Verhoef was the culmination of an afternoon Colloquium that explored the practice of integrative medicine in Canada. More than 250 people in the field, including practitioners and researchers from across Canada, shared their thoughts and ideas on how to move integrative medicine to the next stage of acceptance in Canada.

Fifty-four percent of Canadians used some form of CAM in the last year and 74 percent have used it at some point in their lifetime. Last year, Canadians spent \$5.6 billion in alternative therapies and another \$2.2 million in books, classes, equipment and other CAM-related activities. However, according to Steven Carter from the Canadian Society for Orthomolecular Medicine, despite the widening use of CAM by Canadians and by healthcare practitioners themselves, for CAM to truly achieve widespread acceptance, greater inroads need to be made with researchers, educators, medical associations, government and business.

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