

Health workers lead alternative medicine use

A recent study by Johnson, Ward, Knutson and Sendelbach suggests healthcare workers (at 76 percent) are more likely than the general population (at 63 percent) to use complementary and alternative medicine. This is an important step forward for CAM; doctors and nurses regularly rate in the top five most trusted professions in Canada and their willingness to embrace and endorse CAM as a positive add-on to conventional medicine promotes the acceptance of this important field.

Over time, many theories once considered controversial have become part of good healthcare practice. As a result, more and more Canadians are using elements of complementary and alternative medicine without even realizing these practices – therapeutic massage, acupuncture, etc. – were considered unorthodox a mere 20-years-ago. A 2007 study undertaken by the Fraser Institute found approximately 54 percent of Canadian adults had used CAM therapies in 2006 – a more than four percent increase since 1997. A similar study in the US found a 10 percent increase over a similar time period.

A growing body of work suggests CAM will only continue to increase in popularity as more and more consumers recognize the benefits of complementary or alternative therapies and treatments. And consumers have become savvier when it comes to managing their own healthcare. New technologies, access to the Internet and higher levels of education have made health information accessible to most Canadians. For many, the opportunity to investigate complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) is appealing and adding elements of CAM to their regular health regimen is a natural next step.

The Dr. Rogers Prize Colloquium, which is being hosted in Vancouver on September 23, will examine how four Canadian clinics are currently integrating CAM with conventional medicine. The \$250,000 Dr. Rogers Prize celebrates the contributions of leaders and trailblazers who have dared to pursue new and unfamiliar approaches that fall under the expansive umbrella of “complementary and alternative medicine.” Named after one of BC’s leading advocates for CAM, the Dr. Rogers Prize is awarded biennially to an individual who has made a significant contribution in advancing this important field. The gala award dinner brings together a wide range of practitioners in the CAM field and has become a gathering place where ideas and discussions can flourish.

Moderated by Harvard University’s Allen Grossman, the innovative Colloquium features a panel discussion with representatives from the four clinics. Panelists will tackle questions about the successes and barriers to building and maintaining these clinics and share some of the lessons they have learned. The four clinics represented are:

1. Integrative Healing Arts (Vancouver): Founded by naturopaths Larry Chan and Eric Posen, this clinic helps clients achieve optimal health through the integration of modern science and traditional healing arts. The clinic offers naturopathic and chiropractic medicine, massage therapy and rolfing, Traditional Chinese Medicine and acupuncture, nutritional consultation, weight management programs and a naturopathic spa featuring the Rejuveness system.

2. InspireHealth (Vancouver): Founded by physicians Hal Gunn and Roger Rogers, this clinic focuses on integrated cancer care. Its underlying philosophy is that treatment must be provided for a patient’s mind, body and spirit. InspireHealth uses an integrated approach that combines standard cancer treatments with nutrition, exercise and emotional and spiritual support.

3. Integrative Health Institute (Toronto): Founded by naturopaths Meghan Walker and Erin Wiley, this clinic was founded on the premise of open and

constructive communication between practitioners regarding all aspects of patient care. Inspired by the experiences of naturopaths working with women and their families in rural Africa, IHI believes in providing patients with access to varied medical philosophies and the practitioners who share a common vision for integration.

4. The Seekers Centre for Integrative Medicine (Ottawa): Founded by physician Richard Nahas, this clinic focuses on utilizing the best therapies from the worlds of alternative, traditional and conventional medicine to help people heal. The centre focuses on several key programs: Integrative Cancer Program of Care, Pain Program of Care, Cardiac Program of Care and Women’s Health Program of Care.

Following the panel presentations, attendees will have an opportunity to participate in breakout groups and discussions about CAM in Canada, both now and in the future. All participants will be encouraged to consider ways the community can develop stronger



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networks to improve discussion and collaboration throughout the year.

The day will culminate in the presentation of the \$250,000 Dr. Rogers Prize and a gala dinner. “Due to the number of significant contributors in the field, and the difficulty in discriminating between their achievements, the 2007 and 2009 Prizes were split by a hung jury,” stated Juror Dr. Joseph Pizzorno. “However, we promise you one winner in 2011!” The 2009 Prize was split between Dr. Hal Gunn and Dr. Bud Rickhi and the 2007 Prize between Dr. Abram Hoffer and Dr. Alastair Cunningham.

The Dr. Rogers Prize Gala and Colloquium will provide Canadian leaders and innovators in the field with an opportunity to network, discuss and share their ideas for how to move complementary and alternative medicine forward in the months and years to come. This is an exciting era as integration and collaboration between CAM and conventional medicine becomes more of a reality. The Dr. Rogers Colloquium will move the field one step closer to realizing its full potential. 

For more information about the Dr. Rogers Prize, Colloquium and Gala on September 23, visit www.drrogersprize.org