

## Complementary Health Medicine in Cyberspace

OR HOW TO FIT 92,000 PEOPLE INTO AN 800-SEAT AUDITORIUM

Craig Weinston

On July 25 and 26, I had the privilege of helping to bring a 16-hour holistic health conference that was simultaneously viewed in person and on the Internet, creating both visual and audio reception to over 10,000 people worldwide at any given time. Nearly 100,000 people from the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Britain, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Germany and Brazil tuned in to the live event.

The symposium, "Medicine for the Third Millenium," was created and produced by the Walnut Creek, California-based nonprofit Health Medicine Forum (HMF), an organization of alternative and mainstream practitioners. The symposium was held at the elegant Dean Leshner Regional Center for the Arts and was divided into two full day events: "Living Better Longer" and "Heart of Healing."

The purpose of the event was to introduce the public to what we refer to as "health medicine." Speakers included Barry Sears, PhD, author of *The Zone Diet*; Jean Shinoda Bolen, MD, author of *Close to the Bone*; John McDougall, MD, author of the McDougall Program for a Healthy Heart; Jerry Brown, former California governor and Oakland mayor-elect; Beverly Rubik, PhD, author and panel chair of the National Institutes of Health committee on bioelectromagnetics; Martin Rossman, MD, Dipl. Ac., founder of the Collaborative Medicine Center and co-director of the Academy for Guided Imagery; a host of other speakers and myself, associate director of the HMF.

The event was produced by Bay OnLine, a San Francisco Bay Area high speed Internet access provider owned by Wendell and Derrell Cotton. He is a dedicated advocate of chiropractic and complementary medicine after having been chief financial officer of a local hospital and having had several family members with chronic diseases unsuccessfully treated by conventional medicine. His company has been under development for the past two years and began broadcasting with extremely sophisticated software equipped to provide "real time" cybercasting to all individuals on line.

We learned only the day before the event that a link to our website would be provided by Yahoo for the entirety of the event. This link brought about a worldwide "hit" list of nearly 100,000 with a single day's notice.

I am also grateful to the American Chiropractic Association who with short notice posted the UDRL (web address) on their website throughout the weekend, and access to the California Chiropractic Association e-mail members network helped to spread the word.

The HMF is dedicated to the collaborative exploration, practice and advancement of the emerging discipline of health medicine. We define this concept as being derived from four principles: the integrative practice of interdisciplinary fields of healing; holism as defined by the interconnectedness of mind, body and spirit; a return to a true health care paradigm, including the restoration and maintenance of health as opposed to disease control; and lastly, patient centered care promoting patient self-empowerment.

The organization began in 1995 when a group of six health professionals began to discuss their vision of changing the way health care was being delivered. The founder of the organization, Len Saputo, MD, is a board certified internist with 28 years of experience and a passion for nutritional medicine and natural therapies. It is my great fortune to be the assistant director of this nonprofit organization and to be working hand-in-hand with such a fine individual. Over the course of the next three years, we have grown in membership to over 300 practitioners that includes DCs, MDs, psychologists/counselors, PTs; acupuncturists; massage therapists, and many others. Our monthly meetings, workshops, symposia and panels have brought over 1,500 interested people throughout the San Francisco Bay Area to our events.

The central thread of each event is the collaboration and integration of multiple perspectives. This results in the education of health care practitioners in other health perspectives and paradigms which they may be unfamiliar with. Our greatest achievement I believe has been the creation of the health medicine panels. These are offered on a weekly basis as a unique approach to helping patients with major unresolved health problems. We are in the process of training "health guides" who meet with patients to collect history and data on their assorted diagnoses, tests, and conventional/complementary approaches. This is followed by bringing together at the same time a variety of practitioners who are carefully selected to work together with the patient. In a two-hour session, a deep inquiry begins which explores the physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual dimensions of the patient's condition.

It is common for the patient to feel a degree of focused attention and support beyond what they thought possible. Suggestions are often made for lifestyle modification, dietary alterations, possible diagnostic explorations that may not have been offered previously, and ultimately powerful insights and education enabling the patient to progress with greater hope, inspiration and knowledge so that they can take the next step in their healing. The final therapy plan is worked out with the patient and the health guide at a follow-up consultation where they review, discuss and integrate the pertinent information given by the panel.

As a chiropractor it has always been my goal to see equality between health care providers. Clinical excellence and the capacity to create healing opportunities has less to do with one's professional degree and more to do with one's willingness to be open-minded. This is paramount in the role of assisting a patient to find for themselves what they require for their own healing. I feel that any one person at the right time and in the right place may be able to provide an insight, an adjustment, a correct dosage of supplement or medication that may enable a patient to overcome their disease.

Within these health medicine panels I have seen the egos of many a practitioner overshadowed by the integrative support and communication that occurs in a group. In general meetings I have both lectured and gained insight into a multitude of conditions (AIDS, arthritis, heart disease, fibromyalgia, and ADD/ADHD) and disciplines (qigong, feldenkrais, tai chi, ayurveda, homeopathy and many others). It is within this context that I appreciate what knowledge and skills I have, and in which areas I am but a mere beginner.

My vision is to support a shift in the way health and wellness care is offered in this country. I invite you to contact me if you wish to share in the development of this collaborative, patient centered care approach. The art, science and philosophy of chiropractic is an essential aspect of this vision and I welcome each of your participation.

You can visit the HMF website at  
[url=<http://www.healthmedicine.org>][url].

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