

McCall's integrative medicine clinic bridges medicinal gap between east and west

By Lois Fry

Long Valley Advocate

MCCALL—McCall Memorial Hospital has taken the lead in cutting edge approaches to treating its patients in the McCall area. It has the only integrative medicine clinic internal to a hospital in Idaho, bridging the gap between traditional allopathic medicine and the alternative or integrative paths to wellness.

"We are trying to create more healthy people, not more patients," said Development Director Lyle Nelson.

Integrative medicine means prevention, literally a path to wellness, combining western medicine with alternative therapies (acupuncture, massage therapy, nutrition and exercise). A major component of the wellness concept is behavior modification towards healthier lifestyle habits, making it easier and more sociable to develop the habits we all know are good for us.

Integrative medicine looks for the root cause of the patient's malady. The Oriental method of acupuncture removes blockages,

restoring balance to the energetic system (aka "chi," energy patterns and pathways), which frees energy to flow naturally through the body. Many body systems, vascular and neural, are about the movement of energy. There is good, properly-conducted research on the effectiveness of acupuncture for conditions such as pain reduction, arthritis, depression, anxiety and headaches conducted by regular American Medical Association (AMA) standards of research.

Nelson said that integrative medicine also taps into the power of our minds to create states of physical, mental and emotional wellness. One focus is on managing chronic conditions such as allergies and autoimmune diseases. It manages and returns patients to natural states of optimal wellness, vitality and optimism for where they are in their time of life.

"The most natural cure for the individual is the body's innate capacity to heal and grow, regulating itself as it was meant to do," says Nelson. "The power of the body and mind to recreate

themselves is beyond our ability to comprehend. The key to wellness lies within us and needs only a new twist to unlock our hidden potential. Small shifts in what you're doing can have big impacts on your health. Part of integrative medicine is to help people make those small shifts."

The Clinic offers a six-week stress reduction program and a 13-week healthy weight management program. Both programs are very comprehensive and there are talks on goal setting, utilization, humor and stress management. Nelson said that laughter and humor make a difference in why people are healthy.

Insurance pays for wellness – the Clinic sells supplements, and some acupuncture is paid for when people come in to see Dr. Ostermiller for regular medical needs. Massage therapy or treatment for depression in the integrative medicine clinic is paid by insurance in some cases.

The Integrative Medicine Clinic staff are all licensed and credentialed to do their specialties in their respective fields.