



# Good medicine

Doctors Naturae has the real cure for what ails you

While naturopathic medicine is making inroads throughout the country—naturopathic physicians are now licensed to prescribe drugs in B.C.—there is still a lack of acceptance from traditional doctors, whose leanings toward chemical medication often fly in the face of homeopathic therapies and organic treatments. The extra four years or so required to become a licensed physician also colours their opinion. But at the new Doctors Naturae, located in the Halton Family Health building on the southeast corner of Walkers Line and Highway 5 in Burlington, a natural approach to healthcare is designed to directly complement the care you receive from your family doctor. It makes for strange bedfellows, with a community of 25 traditional physicians on the second and third floors, and a sleek new full-service naturopathic practice on the main floor, replete with a comprehensive professional dispensary, a demonstration kitchen and a hand-picked staff of two holistic nutritionists and two naturopathic doctors.

"We have the support of the public, and we're slowly gaining support from the doctors upstairs," says Doctors Naturae director and naturopathic doctor Tracy Pan. "A handful of the doctors have personally welcomed us and a few have sent their patients down to us for help. We've also had some of their nurses and assistants coming for treatment. Word of mouth of our success on those fronts is helping to build relationships upstairs."

But history's hindering the process. "The old-school philosophy was that these people were quacks—almost polar to what we were doing," says Dr. Tim Salter, the centre's medical director. "But the newer generation of doctors is more accepting of naturopathic doctors. Once we got to know them and saw what they were doing, we discovered that it complements what we're doing. And Tracy knows when it's no longer her field of expertise—when to tell her patient, 'It's time to see your family doctor,'—whereas they do great dietary counselling for diabetics, for hypertension, lower blood pressure and other things because they have that expertise and we often have time constraints."

"A naturopathic doctor is similar to a medical doctor, except that we treat with natural remedies, and

we can't prescribe drugs in Ontario—yet," notes Pan. "And we do have the luxury of having more time than a medical doctor to go through a patient's history. It helps us go beyond treating the symptoms and get to the root of the ailment that's causing them."

"There are still some areas we don't agree on—but that's OK, because there's common ground too," says Salter. "There's a place for all of us in this market of keeping patients healthy. The bottom line is that if we can make someone better and improve their quality of life, I'm certainly open to it."

**"My doctor was very supportive of seeking alternative treatment. Today my daughter's symptoms are almost non-existent."**

As in all business, location is key for Doctors Naturae. "Burlington, as a community, wants to spend on their health and wants to prevent further disease," notes Pan, whose facility is also taking advantage of its position within the medical building, adjacent to the walk-in clinic. "We attract many patients from the clinic," says Pan. "They're waiting for a while and often get up and browse for alternative ways of treating their condition."

And they're doing so with great success. "My daughter was suffering from mood disorders and symptoms generally associated with growing up," says Nancy, one of many devoted clients. "We had only pursued regular medical treatment. When the bloodwork showed that there was nothing 'medically' wrong, we were told to wait and see if it gets worse before they'd refer us to a specialist. My doctor upstairs, however, was very supportive of us seeking alternative medicine for treatment. After visiting Doctors Naturae, my daughter's symptoms became manageable to non-existent. Her energy increased as well as her moods. The problem didn't disappear, but it changed to a point where it no longer affects everyday life."

While it's a progressive approach to medicine, Pan acknowledges that it will take time before the bond of trust permeates the medical community in her building. Still, it's a business model the owners are betting on, with similar facilities opening in south Burlington and Hamilton in 2011. Optimistic? Perhaps. But it's certainly a healthy attitude to take.

BIZ



Comment on this article at  
[bizeditor@townmedia.ca](mailto:bizeditor@townmedia.ca)