

Healing Journal

A newsletter from Abbott Northwestern's Institute for Health and Healing

Founded by the George Family Foundation and the Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation

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Adding Leaders to Remain a Leader

Increasing credibility and connections with the medical community, the Institute welcomes a new medical director and director of research.

Every year, the Institute for Health and Healing reaffirms its position as one of the nation's most innovative models. "Our advancement of health care by way of an integrative medicine approach is supported by clinical and research expertise," commented Lori Knutson, Institute for Health and Healing executive director. "In the end, it will transform the health care experience for the patient, the provider and the whole system."


As the medical community accepts and embraces the complementary and alternative healing possibilities offered by the Institute, the organization has continued to experience strong growth. Because of this success, nationally recognized leadership can be attracted to capitalize on and increase the existing momentum. In late 2007, two additions to Institute leadership will enhance the Institute's ability to offer fully integrated, clinically proven resources, filling the roles of medical director and director of research.

Greg Plotnikoff, MD, MTS, FACP, joins the Institute from the Keio University Medical School in Tokyo, Japan. Prior to teaching at the University, Plotnikoff was a co-founder and medical director at the University of Minnesota Center for Spirituality and Healing. His continuing studies since completing his own education have included courses in bioethics at Georgetown University, medical acupuncture at the UCLA Medical School/Helms Medical Institute, kampo medicine (a form of traditional Chinese medicine) at Keio University and a Macy Fellowship at Harvard Medical School.



"Greg's new role as our medical director is crucial for further integration of alternative medicines as the standard of care," said Knutson. "He brings another level of credibility and integrity for other physicians, and by partnering with them, Greg will infuse the philosophy of complementary and alternative medicine into conventional medical algorithms of care."

Jeff Dusek, MA and PhD, will serve as the Institute's research director. "Jeff's efforts through clinical research will give proof to the interventions and methods of integrative medicine," said Knutson. Dusek's background includes instructing at Harvard Medical School and Boston University, as well as serving as associate director for clinical research at the Beth-Israel Deaconess Medical Center at Harvard Medical School. While working at the Mind/Body Medical

Institute at Harvard, he was a co-principal investigator of a seven-year, \$10 million grant funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Listing Dusek's many achievements, Knutson commented, "Jeff's credibility and integrity from his established research career with Harvard, the NIH funding and published studies will definitely serve to promote our mission of establishing a comprehensive, hospital-wide approach to integrative medicine." 



Institute for Health and Healing

Evolving Care at the Hands-On Level

The Transformative Nurse Training Program gives nurses additional ways to provide care to patients as well as themselves.

As caregivers with the greatest amount of face-to-face and hands-on contact with patients, nurses are particularly attuned to the subtle and not-so-subtle benefits that an integrative approach to care can provide. Wanting to share their knowledge and experience with nurses across Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Institute for Health and Healing executive director Lori Knutson and the integrative medicine nurse clinicians started offering day-long workshops shortly after the Institute for Health and Healing opened its doors. Before long, it became evident that there was great demand for education in holistic nursing theory and principles. In addition, the nurse clinicians realized that training nurses in ways to incorporate complementary therapies into their practice would have huge and long-term impact on the care of Abbott Northwestern patients.


“While Lori gave us big-picture guidance and a PhD nurse helped review course content, each nurse-clinician at the Institute developed their own topics within their own area of focus,” said Debbie Smith, who along with Mimi Lindell, coordinates the program that has come to be known as the Transformative Nurse Training Program. It has evolved into a 48-hour-long curriculum, with a positive reputation that spread throughout Abbott Northwestern, mostly by word of mouth from nurses who had participated in early sessions.

“The attendees of the program are nurses from a wide variety of disciplines, but many are from a more acute care setting since we are a hospital-based program,” commented Lindell. “We attracted people who were excited about and interested in integrative care, and more recently, have even had attendees from Children’s Hospital and Ridgeview Medical Center.” In addition to the program curriculum,

nurses also get an invaluable resource: ongoing mentorship with the Institute’s nurse clinicians.

Both Smith and Lindell have been energized by the response they’ve received about the program. “Most people go into nursing because they are passionate about it,” said Smith. “But the system today is very hard on that love of nursing and caring for others—it’s a very demanding field right now. But it’s so fun to see the passion for nursing reawakened during these workshops. Nurses spend a lot of time taking care of the machines of health care—the pumps and computers and such. These classes help nurses see how incorporating a small change into their practice can create a way to get back to their patients by creating additional time in their day.”

Lindell adds, “We also see that through these classes, nurses begin to give themselves permission to take time for themselves, to cherish themselves in the context of their personal as well as their professional lives. Self-care is a thread woven throughout our class content, and it becomes a very personal topic. We tell them, ‘It’s OK to take the time to do this, to take care of yourself so you can be passionate and more present with your work.’” Smith adds, “It’s like being in an airplane when they talk about the oxygen masks you wear in case of a loss of cabin pressure—you put your own oxygen mask on before you try to help someone else. That’s what nurses have to do: take care of themselves first, so they can give to their patients from a place of fullness.”

For information about participating in the next session of the Transformative Nurse Training Program, please call Debbie Smith at 612-863-7940 or e-mail debra.smith5@allina.com, or contact Mimi Lindell at 612-863-6238 or e-mail miriam.lindell@allina.com. 

Bod Pod Joins the Vikings Squad

The intense pressure of preparing for an NFL season is not limited to a team’s players. A huge behind-the-scenes effort from the coaching staff preps players, mentally as well as physically, through a scientific, carefully crafted training regimen. Tom Kanavy, strength and conditioning coach for the Minnesota Vikings, depends on precision measurements to track the progress of his players throughout training. So in preparation for the 2007-2008 season, he called in Sue Masemer of the LiveWell Fitness Center, utilizing her experience as an exercise physiologist and her expertise with the center’s Bod Pod.

“The Bod Pod is our state-of-the-art body composition tracking system. The NFL has been using the Bod Pod for body comp measurements, but for most teams, it doesn’t make sense to

own a unit that you’re only using occasionally,” commented Masemer. “So we have been coming in and doing measurements for the Vikings during the off-season training program for the last three years.” The results of the Bod Pod readings are used to craft individual players’ training plan, as well as aiding the team nutritionist with dietary plans.

Kanavy relies on the exceptionally precise measurements that the Bod Pod offers. “There’s a plethora of research that backs up air displacement densitometry, which is what the Bod Pod uses. We had one at the Philadelphia Eagles, where I was the assistant strength and conditioning coach,” he commented. “I find Bod Pod results very accurate and the testing very efficient. And the reliable measurements showed how, over time, we could reduce body fat with proper training and proper diet.”

Family Ties

Blythe Brenden: Carrying on her family's philanthropic legacy.




In 2004, the Institute for Health and Healing was founded in part through a generous donation from the Ted and Roberta Mann Foundation. In the years since, the family tradition of philanthropy has been continued by Blythe Brenden, Roberta Mann's daughter, co-chair of the Institute's Steering Committee

and member of the Abbott Northwestern Foundation board. "It is exciting to be a part of a national model focused on the mind, body and spirit of healing," commented Brenden. "The fact that our mission is to have a comprehensive program that blends the best of conventional therapies with healing therapies to treat the whole person, in both inpatient and outpatient care, is truly amazing."

Brenden's enthusiasm goes far beyond her tireless efforts on the steering committee, with continued financial support at a significant level. "Blythe has been a part of the community leadership of the Institute from the very beginning," commented Rich Meyer, Abbott Northwestern Hospital Foundation's president. "She has made two generous gifts of her own, including a donation that fueled the creation of the Abbott Northwestern LiveWell Fitness Center. Blythe has impressive energy, intellect and leadership skills. Her work benefits the patients at Abbott Northwestern every day, and we are privileged to have her support."

Her most recent donation made the creation of two leadership roles possible with the Institute for Health and Healing, adding Greg Plotnikoff, MD, as medical director and Jeff Dusek, PhD, as research director. "I'm very grateful that I can support two such wonderful leaders in integrative medicine," said Brenden. "We are so fortunate to have them as part of our team, and they will be crucial to our continuing development efforts and our continuing work at the Institute for Health and Healing."


Brenden's commitment to this community extends far beyond Abbott Northwestern. She serves as the Steering Committee Chair of the Minnesota Shubert Performing Arts and Education Center, and is also a Guthrie Theater Board Member, a Minneapolis Institute of Art Trustee and is on the University of Minnesota School of Music Advisory Committee. However, a personal connection with integrative medicine makes her relationship with the Institute a particularly meaningful one. "When my grandfather was going through his illness, we used integrative services for him; and at the time, I did not know it had a name," said Brenden. "I just knew that it was helping him and making him more comfortable. Later, I learned more about integrative medicine and better understood the mind, body and spirit connection. When the opportunity came to work with Abbott Northwestern, our family felt that it was very important and exciting to be a part of this effort."

The Institute for Health and Healing relies on the financial generosity of the community to maintain and extend its services. For more information or to make a donation, please contact Mary Jones at 612-863-4612. 

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The objectives and process of altering a professional football player's body composition is quite different from that of a typical person's. As Masemer reflects on her work with the team, she can see how the measurements help make a difference in a player's performance—and in an everyday person's life. "As I put each player in the Bod Pod, I could appreciate how incredibly their bodies are designed for what they do as athletes, and what they have to do to prepare themselves," said Masemer. "But there's a whole continuum of people who can benefit from the information the Bod Pod has to provide—people who have no idea what they need to weigh, who might be told to lose more weight than they really should. At the LiveWell Fitness Center, this technology is available to everybody, plus the training credentials and background of our staff means that everybody can affect their quality of life."

Masemer is quick to emphasize that the LiveWell Fitness Center services, including the Bod Pod, are not reserved for world-class athletes but any person interested in improving their overall quality of life and well-being. "Our whole approach at the LiveWell Fitness Center is different from a typical health club because we see the whole person, especially the mind-body connection," said Masemer. "We look at medical history, genetics and family tendencies to help identify goals within any health constraints. These are the sorts of things that come with our membership that are hard to find anywhere else."

For more information about the LiveWell Fitness Center and its services, call 612-863-5178. 



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From the Institute for Health and Healing

The Institute for Health and Healing is supported by the financial generosity of the community. To make a donation to the Institute, call Abbott Northwestern Hospital Foundation at 612-863-4126.

LiveWell Fitness Center Classes

12-Week Weight Management Program

Autumn session begins week of Sept. 24
Tuesday, 4 to 5 p.m. or
Thursday, noon to 1 p.m.

Take Action is a highly successful program of action for people who want to lose weight and keep it off. The 12-week Take Action Program was developed around extensive research on permanent weight loss. Participants learn the skills they need to manage their weight, including a regular program of exercise, healthy nutrition and lifestyle modification. Healthy habits are developed and reinforced through group support and weekly sessions covering nutrition and behavioral changes. This program also includes an individualized fitness profile, personal training session and nutrition consultation.

Call 612-863-5178 to register.

Fee: \$249 Member
\$299 Non-member

W.O.W. (Working Out with Weights)

W.O.W. is perfect for individuals who are new to strength training or anyone looking for more variety in their training program. Classes will focus on proper technique, safety and keys to successful program design. W.O.W. class includes four one-hour, small group sessions, program exercise booklet, skinfold body composition measurement, and an introduction to free weights, BOSU, body bar, balance board, machines, tubing, stability ball and proper stretching.

Classes offered at a variety of times.

Call 612-863-5178 for more information.

Fee: \$50 Member
\$70 Non-member

LiveWell Fitness Center's Programs and Services

The LiveWell Fitness Center offers a wide array of special programs and services. Nutrition counseling, personal training, comprehensive fitness assessments, metabolism testing, body composition analysis and group fitness classes are just a few of the offerings. A more complete description and fee schedule is available at the center's reception desk or call 612-863-5178 for more information.