

Leading From The Heart

A 21-year-old woman is denied residential treatment for an eating disorder by her insurance company after her physician recommends treatment and then appeals the denial due to the severity of this individual's condition. The denial stands.

A physician takes an oath first, do no harm. She has the responsibility for the patient's welfare and the insurance company has the power. The message to the patient is that she cannot get treatment without doing further damage to her body, which feeds her own internal ambivalence and shame.

A young man is depressed and medications for treatment are not working. He finds a way to get a



All's Well
Health for Body, Mind, Spirit

by Moira Fitzpatrick, PhD, ND

few appointments with a naturopathic physician, who together with the young man creates an integrative plan using both medications and supplements. For the first time in his life, he is no longer depressed. The insurance company denies continuation of care.

A homeless woman has not had a pap smear in 10 years, now she has cervical cancer, one of the most preventable cancers.

I am sure everyone reading this article has a story to share. I cannot help but wonder how our collective consciousness can cope with how we are denying a basic right to our brothers and sisters. How is it that so many stories have

emerged and attempts to change the system are snuffed out? How is it that the current administration came into office with hope and the faith of the people that change is possible?

Where are we and where do we want to go?

How would you imagine health care to be? I start with the premise that there is a common denominator for all of us. We live in bodies, which are vulnerable to stresses, disease, and our own consciousness. Some of us are prone to allergies, others digestive issues such as heartburn, indigestion, irritable bowel, others high blood pressure, high cholesterol, blood sugar instability and cancer.

I consider the cornerstone of any healthcare plan to be prevention. Prevention has a few meanings. It may be annual exams, labs, pap smears and other tests that let us know we are on track with health. Perhaps it goes further and looks at the food we eat, the amount sleep we get, exercise, emotional support, spiritual support and how we handle stress. Such a plan would mean a shift in culture to one of life, where all people have access to nutritious, non-processed food, and an environment free of pollutants and toxic chemicals.

Perhaps a place to begin is with education and our children. Twenty percent of their daily caloric intake comes from sugar-sweetened beverages. Our children are suffering from high blood sugar, cholesterol and blood pressure. We live in a culture where snacks have replaced meals and the number of families who sit down together for meals is diminishing.

Here in Washington and throughout the Northwest, a value is placed on alternative and complementary medicine. Naturopathic physicians, integrative medical doctors, and integrative mental health practitioners take time to understand the whole person, search for the cause of a problem and rely on the innate healing power within the individual. For those whose insurance covers these services or who can afford to pay for them, health and the quality of life can improve. In addition to

these services, acupuncture, massage, and chiropractic care are all available and can be integrated to meet individual needs. There is a culture of care here in the Northwest that goes to the heart of preventative medicine.

As a naturopathic physician, I consider myself a partner with you in achieving optimal health. Prevention begins with the food we eat. The best diet is the one that nutritionally supports your body, mind, and senses. Some individuals need more protein, others higher complex carbohydrates, some individuals can eat more raw foods and others need their vegetables cooked. You can be assured that foods from a full rainbow of colors are typically anti-inflammatory and nutrient dense.

Doctor as teacher represents an important brick in the foundation of health. The stability of our hormones is affected by sleep, stress, exercise, and food. Each system of the body interacts with the other and the doctor's understanding of metabolism and physiology can identify patterns and support you in making changes to optimize health. You can learn that excitotoxins or food additives increase cravings for junk food and increase consumption. Some excitotoxins include MSG, aspartame, and hydrolyzed vegetable protein. Exercise improves blood sugar, lowers triglycerides, improves HDL and improves

weight loss.

Spiritual health – including meditation, prayer, and participating in a church that speaks to you – have been shown to improve health and vitality. Prayer and meditation feed the spirit. Yoga is a practice that supports the flow of energy throughout the body, helps to heal the body by decreasing stress hormones and stimulates internal organs. Identifying and freeing ourselves from negative beliefs opens the doorway to self love and creating a new way of life that supports the essence of who you are.

The use of herbs, nutrients and supplements accelerate the return to balance and harmony. Once an individual returns to a balanced, healthy physiology, then there is no longer a need for so many supplements. Sustaining a healthy lifestyle becomes reinforcing as we feel stronger and vitally alive.

Health care reform goes beyond basic care. It requires a consciousness of life and love, a return to our essential nature. Let us work together.

Moira Fitzpatrick is a naturopathic physician and licensed clinical psychologist, who practices in the Northgate area of Seattle. She is a primary care provider, specializes in the unique health concerns of women and functional holistic medicine. Dr. Fitzpatrick can be reached at (206) 525-5576, www.theemeraldcenter.com.

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The Tao of The Tarot: The Hermit

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dunces of the past, was believed to help spiral in the intelligence of the Universe.

Guiding the qi or life force energy downwards through the upper dan tian in the head, the Qigong practitioner activates this spiritual center facilitating transpersonal awareness, divine insight and sacred dreaming.

Qigong movement meditation

Go to the place you would like to practice and get into a comfortable position. Bring the tip of your tongue upwards to gently connect with the upper palate just behind the upper teeth to connect the flow of energy called the microcosmic orbit around the body. Relax the focus of your gaze, slowly closing your eyes and bringing in your spiritual

light. Relax the body part by part.

Bring your mind's attention to the center of the palms, the acupoint known as Lao Gong. Turn your palms forward and imagine yourself holding a ball of vibrant energy or qi in front of your body. Focus on the palms of the hands and with relaxed arms, use your shoulders to slowly lift the ball of qi upward towards the heavens. When your hands reach the level of your ears, relax your wrists turning your palms downward. Bending your elbows to the sides, slowly and naturally guide the ball of qi down through the top of the head and into the central of the body. Moving your hands softly downward in front of the body, feel or imagine the energy going through the middle of the head, through the center of the chest and into the lower

dan tian at the center of the lower abdomen. Relax the hands to the side of the body and repeat several times.

Finish the practice with hands comfortably resting over the belly. Take a few deep breathes to concentrate the energy generated into the vitality center of the lower dan tian. Set a positive intention for the rest of the day. When ready, slowly open your eyes.

Christina Bjergo is author of The Tao of Tarot, a Washington-based acupuncturist, Qigong Grand Master of Sacred Serpent Spiral Qigong and founder of Qigong Dreaming. For upcoming classes and more information visit the website www.taooftarot.com.