

10 years Serving Tigard-Tualatin With Naturopathic Medical Care

BY DR. JEFF CLARK, TRUE HEALTH MEDICINE PC

Time goes fast when you are doing what you love. A cliché that rings true for the doctors of True Health Medicine.

When we opened our Tualatin clinic in August of 2008 the country was witnessing a financial meltdown and entering the great recession. People acted unsure if they could afford groceries, let alone healthcare. The Times community newspaper interviewed us at our opening, and the main question on the reporter's mind was "what were you thinking, opening a new business right now?!"

We all graduated in June of 2007 with 4 and 6 year medical degrees from the National College of Natural Medicine, now the National University of Natural Medicine (NUNM) in Portland. NUNM is the oldest continuously operating naturopathic medical school in N. America. Naturopathic Doctors have been licensed in Oregon since 1927, and have an excellent safety record.

We studied June and July, then sat for 2 days for board exams that August of 2007, and were notified later in September that we had passed. The time in-between passing boards and opening our clinic was spent developing a business plan, arranging funding, finding, leasing and outfitting our clinic space at 8555 SW Tualatin Road. To say we were perplexed by that reporter's question is an understatement. The answer that was self-evident to us "after all we have done to become doctors, what else would you have us do?"

To say it has been easy would not be true. We've discovered that we live and suffer at the whims of health insurance companies, and the plans they issue and administer. We persist, and see brighter days ahead.

Naturopathic medicine represents a real choice in your approach to health and medicine. Yet Naturopathic doctors are more the same

than we are different from "conventional" medicine. We are all founded on the same medical science taught in all western medical schools. When we share a diagnosis with our MD colleagues, we are all talking the same language and understandings. We are increasingly seeing policy makers and progressive thinking doctors in the conventional world move more and more into naturopathic thinking. More and better pharmaceutical drugs are not going to be enough to save us from our two biggest causes of death and disability, heart disease and cancer. Our largest modifiable risk factors for these diseases, obesity and diabetes, can only be managed, but not resolved by medications. Lifestyle modification is the best, first treatment for everyone who desires health throughout their lives.

We, and you too should subscribe to the naturopathic therapeutic order. Diet and lifestyle changes should always be the first to consider. Our physiology operates on biochemistry. It is possible to influence and even modify that biochemistry so the body regains normal function using biochemical agents. Selected nutrients in concentrated form targeting specific biochemical pathways can yield extremely satisfying results in the return to self-sustaining health. Herbal medicines were the first drugs in the ancient times where medicine has its origins. Today, herbal agents are the source and inspiration for around 60% of the pharmaceutical drugs in use. Then of course there are pharmaceutical drugs themselves. Most adult Americans take one or many pharmaceutical drugs every day, making pharmaceuticals the most profitable industry on the planet. Yes, naturopathic doctors prescribe those too.

Does there have to be an either or? In our practice it is possible for a treatment plan to have elements of all these medical tools, life style changes, biochemical agents, herbal medicines and pharmaceuticals. Our desire always is for a person to never need anything beyond a healthy lifestyle for most of their life.

Should we simply manage symptoms, or should we seek out and modify root causes as much as possible? Not every health problem can be resolved back to normal, and many will require long-term treatments. But if your intent is only ever to manage symptoms, and not attempt to restore as much normal health as possible, you get more, not less lifelong treatments.

The intent of naturopathic doctors is to always seek out the root cause. Our deep belief that it is possible to encourage the body's innate ability to heal itself -- those are the most important differences between naturopathic and conventional medical practice.

Our passion for naturopathic medicine continues, and our persistence in serving our community is evident. Thank you to all who have utilized our services in your own pursuit of true health.



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