

Medicine. ♦♦♦HERBAL CANCER TREATMENT PIONEER MILDRED NELSON DIES On January 28, Mildred Nelson, RN, the nurse who helped to pioneer a botanical cancer treatment called Hoxsey therapy, died of cardiac arrest in her California home.

Nelson first learned about natural approaches for treating cancer from a folksy entrepreneur named Harry Hoxsey, whom she met while working as a staff nurse in the Hoxsey Cancer Clinic in Dallas, Tex, in the 1940s.

Clouded by controversy for most of its history, Hoxsey therapy consists of internal liquid and externally applied medicines derived from Native-American plants and herbs, supplemental vitamins and minerals, dietary modification, and a positive attitude.

Although published clinical trials of the therapy are still lacking, a report carried out by the Office of Technology Assessment in the late 1980s included a historical and literature review of Hoxsey therapy by University of Illinois historian Patricia Spain Ward, PhD.

Dr Ward noted that "Hoxsey's formula, however strangely concocted by modern scientific standards, does indeed contain many plant substances of marked therapeutic activity ... [one of which is] now recognized as predictive of antitumor properties."

Nelson was 79. ♦♦♦
ONLINE JOB NETWORK INTRODUCED FOR MASSAGE THERAPISTS Tapping the largest pool of professionals in its field of massage therapy, the American Massage Therapy Association (AMTA) has launched a national job network on the World Wide Web.

Located at <http://www.amtamassage.org>, the new feature on AMTA's Web site provides clinics, hospitals, chiropractic offices, spas, health

clubs, hotels, resorts, and other employers the opportunity to advertise their job



offerings for massage therapists directly to the 37 000 members of the AMTA. Association members looking for work may post their own résumés free of charge.

For more information contact the AMTA at 820 Davis St, Suite 100, Evanston, IL 60201-4444; phone, (847) 864-0123; fax, (847) 864-1178; e-mail, info@inet.amtamassage.org. ♦♦♦

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE REPORT BACKS MEDICAL USE OF MARIJUANA When officials in the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy commissioned a report on mar-

ijuana from the Institute of Medicine (IOM), they probably weren't expecting a statement advocating medical use of the drug, but that's basically what they got. According to the IOM's findings released March 17, marijuana may be one of the most effective treatments available for those with serious diseases such as AIDS.

IOM investigators also declared that marijuana was not particularly addictive and did not appear to be a "gateway" to the use of harder drugs such as heroin or cocaine. According to the report, there is no evidence that approving the medical use

INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE STILL A HOT TOPIC IN US GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE

Two recent hearings before the House Committee on Government Reform—one in February and one in March—had special relevance to alternative medicine. On February 24, a hearing titled "Opening the Mainstream to Complementary and Alternative Medicine: How Much Integration Is Really Taking Place?" addressed the issue of additional public funding for CAM-related research.

For Committee Chair Dan Burton (R-Ind), whose mother and stepfather succumbed to lung cancer last year and whose wife successfully treated breast cancer with alternative medicine, the issue is both vitally important and exquisitely personal.

"With the epidemic-level increases of chronic conditions ... as well as the high percentages of cancers ... we have to be aggressive and open-minded in looking for additional options in medical care," he told the committee. "We have to find effective and efficient ways to treat chronic and debilitating illnesses."

In addition to presentations by Dean Ornish, MD, Brian Berman, MD, and a couple who had used the Ornish method, the February 24 hearing included testimony from Tinsel Town. Jane Seymour, perhaps best known for her role as a frontier physician on *Dr Quinn: Medicine Woman*, related her real-life experiences using alternative medicine.

The daughter of a physician and sister of a trained homeopath, Seymour described her near-fatal reaction to an injection of cephalosporin, which was prescribed for her bronchitis. "Needless to say," she noted, "since that close call, I've been more inclined to ask questions and seek options in my medical health." Seymour called for more integration of complementary therapies and the establishment of a CAM department in every American hospital.

The hearing on March 10 was titled "Cardiovascular Disease: Is the Federal Government Doing More Harm Than Good? EDTA Chelation." Testimony was heard from medical experts in 2 panels. "Chelation has remained one of the most controversial topics in alternative medicine," said Rep Burton in his opening remarks. "It is important to remove long-standing bias from our government agencies, to conduct research in areas where there is a need, and to preserve the free flow of information in this country, including that of differing medical opinions."

For full text of each testimonial in the February 24 hearing, visit <http://www.house.gov/reform/hearings/altmed299/index.htm>. For those in the March 10 hearing, visit http://www.house.gov/reform/hearings/chelation3_10_99/index.htm.

of marijuana would increase the public's abuse of the drug.

The report added, however, that "[s]moked marijuana should not generally be recommended for long-term medical use," and that "for certain patients such as the terminally ill or those with debilitating symptoms, the long-term risks are not of great concern."

A product of 18 months of research, the IOM report highlighted continued concerns over the drug, noting that the common practice of smoking marijuana was medically dangerous and asking for more studies on how the drug works on the human body.

For the most part, however, this independent medical review of scientific research and patient experience found "substantial consensus" to indicate that for some people the potential medical benefits of marijuana outweigh the risks. ♦♦♦**COLORADO BILL WOULD REGULATE STATE'S NATUROPATHS** Members of the Colorado Association of Naturopathic Physicians (CANP) are rallying behind a bill introduced January 7 by Colorado's Speaker of the House, Russell George (R-Rifle).



Debate has raged among various alternative healthcare practitioners in the state ever since George introduced HB-1051, which would require Colorado's naturopaths to be registered.

"One reason the bill is important is that naturopathic physicians are treating and diagnosing without a license—

a violation of the Medical Practice Act," says Rena Bloom, ND, a member of both the American Association of Naturopathic Physicians (AANP) and the CANP.

"Another is that, without

proper registration," Dr Bloom told *Alternative Therapies*, "the public has no way of differentiating who is an ND and who isn't."

At press time, HB-1051 was still in committee. To

receive a copy of the CANP's legislative fact sheet about the bill, call (303) 380-1189. To find out more about naturopathic training, contact the AANP at (206) 298-0126 or visit their Web site, <http://www.naturopathic.org>.

INTEGRATION IS KEY AT FOURTH ANNUAL ALTERNATIVE THERAPIES SYMPOSIUM AND EXPOSITION

More than 800 attendees streamed through the revolving doors of the New York Marriott World Trade Center for the Fourth Annual *Alternative Therapies* Symposium and Exposition March 25 through 28. Cosponsored by the SUNY at Stony Brook Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, jointly sponsored by the Annenberg Center for Health Sciences at Eisenhower, and supported by REMO Drums, this year's conference was a smashing success with attendees and participants alike.

The tone of the symposium was set during the dynamic keynote address delivered by *Alternative Therapies* Executive Editor Larry Dossey, MD. Evoking Alfred North Whitehead's notion of "connexity," Dr Dossey described his vision of a future of healing that will incorporate a nonlocal understanding of consciousness. Building on similar sentiments, on the following morning Andrew Weil, MD, cited new theories in quantum physics—what he called a "tsunami in the world of science"—that emerged during the first 3 decades of the 20th century. "You can't do away with consciousness," he said, reminding the audience that phenomena such as the placebo effect were far from "extrinsic," but actually a healing response from within.

Preconference workshops were equally stimulating. In "Imagery and Healing," for example, Jeanne Achterberg, PhD, and Frank Lawlis, PhD, discussed the use of imagery for maintaining health and for personal exploration. "Historically, imagery has only been used in times of crisis," noted Dr Achterberg. "It's the way body and mind communicate." Elaborating the 3 doshas (or body types) of *vita*, *pitta*, and *kapha* in his preconference introduction to Ayurveda, Vasant Lad, MSc, stressed that "integration doesn't mean mixing 2 approaches. Integration should happen at the level of etiology—in the complete manifestation of disease and treatment." There were several experiential sessions as well, including a mesmerizing drum circle led by Arthur Hull and the chance to walk a labyrinth and achieve an altered state of consciousness courtesy of Stephen G. Wright, MBE, FRCN, and Jean Sayre-Adams, RN. In their bare feet and with sacred candles lighting the way, more than 100 attendees took the opportunity to learn from this spiritual tool.

Other sessions ran the gamut from shamanism and African medicine to herbs, osteopathy, meditation, and integrative healing for the treatment of AIDS and HIV. Cutting-edge research on areas ranging from spiritual healing and acupuncture to natural treatments for neuropsychiatric disorders and integrative medicine data collection also were presented. (For full text of platform abstracts, see pp 93-101 in the March 1999 issue of the journal.) Some of the fruit of this research could be seen in the exhibit hall, which featured more than 60 booths teeming with the latest CAM products and services. With dedicated hours, a demonstration stage, and several prize giveaways, the hall buzzed with activity and provided an opportunity for speakers and other attendees to network with healthcare providers.

The conference wrapped up with musician-clinician Therese Schroeder-Sheker's discussion of the Chalice of Repose Project, in which she described her work as a "contemplative practice" involving the performance of prescriptive music for the dying. "It's palliative medicine that works with the rhythm of the patient," she said. *Alternative Therapies* Senior Editor Jeanne Achterberg, PhD, closed the conference with a call for a new "radical empiricism" honoring all experience including so-called "anomalous" events. For audiotapes of most sessions including preconference workshops, call Conference Recording Service, Inc, at (510) 527-3600, or use the order form appearing on p 35 in this issue. Individual tapes and sets range from \$10 to \$59.

Planning for next year's symposium is already under way. For information or to be put on the mailing list, call InnoVision Communications at (800) 899-1712.