

# Demand for 'integrated' health care grows



By Bill Bradshaw

## Acupuncture, Oriental medicine clinic thrives

**E**NTERPRISE — Tired of pills? Dread surgery? Eagle Cap Wellness may have the type of health care you're looking for.

Jamie Kimball, a doctor of acupuncture and Oriental medicine, recently moved her 4-year-old practice from her original location on East Main Street to 616 W. North St. across from Happy Gardens Chinese Restaurant.

"We're a wellness center," Kimball said. "We provide integrated health care along with traditional medicine to give people an option outside of what you would consider traditional or Western medicine. There are a lot of terms involved to what we do — integrative, I think, is the most 'PC' word these days."

She also recently welcomed Amy Zahm, another DAOM, to her practice, which consists of five practitioners and two office staff. The clinic offers acupuncture, chiropractic, naturopathic, physical therapy and massage services, as well as a holistic approach that often uses body work, supplements, herbs and nutritional guidance.

Zahm, Kimball said, had been practicing at another wellness center in Wallowa County since the early 2000s and joined Eagle Cap in early February.

Kimball said she and Zahm "treat all sorts of conditions, pain, anxiety, you name it. We can treat anything that walks into our door."

Contrary to the concerns the uninitiated may have about acupuncture, she said it's actually quite painless and very relaxing. It's about inserting a needle into one of 500 spots on the body where, based on the practitioner's knowledge of the body, she can achieve an expected result.

"How I determine where I put in the points is based on what the person is telling me, what I feel in their pulse — pulse diagnosis is a big part of acupuncture — and then what I feel in their body," Kimball said. "The points get placed in areas of either muscle tension or different points depending on their action and what they do. The points balance out the hormones, they calm down the nervous system, they release your body's own natural endorphins — it's kind of like taking a pain pill, only naturally — and it gets the body to establish a whole new stasis."

She said the tiny needles are smaller than a human hair and about 100 could be fit inside a standard hypodermic needle.

"You don't feel them when they go in — some-



An acupuncture needle — which is smaller than a human hair — is shown by Jamie Kimball, a doctor of acupuncture and Oriental medicine, at her clinic, Eagle Cap Wellness, in Enterprise. The clinic moved to its current location in January.

times you can feel a tiny little bit of a pinch, but for the most part you don't feel anything," she said. "That's one of people's biggest surprises is they're really scared it's going to hurt and it doesn't. The nice part about it is after you get the needles in, you get to lay there for 20 minutes and during that 20 minutes is when your body releases all its natural endorphins and it's a very relaxing experience. Even if you're a 'Type A' personality and your brain doesn't like to shut off very easily, everybody is able to relax because it's released those endorphins."

But the clinic is about more than acupuncture.

"The herbal medicine is another big part of what we do," she said. "I can't treat any internal conditions without the herbs. The acupuncture does a lot, but the herbs are a big part of the medicine."

Having studied for 10 years, primarily at the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine in Portland, she found her studies quite similar to that which a traditional medical doctor undergoes.

"OCOM is a really cool college because they focus a lot on Western terminology and being able to integrate acupuncture and herbs

into the Western world," Kimball said, adding that while many Oriental medicine schools study a more philosophy-based approach, "OCOM is definitely a more medical-based approach where we take what we do and can integrate it with other providers."

In so doing, here in Wallowa County she's developed a good working relationship with practitioners of traditional medicine. She's also credentialed to practice at Wallowa Memorial Hospital, although she does not perform surgery, which is not considered a part of Oriental medicine.

"I work closely with a lot of providers in the community, so if we think surgery's necessary, I can refer (patients) to them," she said. "What I do is preimpose surgery support and help with surgery recovery."

She emphasizes that her practice does not try to replace traditional medicine. "Western medicine is still absolutely needed," she said. "There are things I can't do — I can't cure cancer. I can't fix a failed kidney. But can I help with cancer support? Yes. Can I help with nausea and other side effects from chemotherapy? I can certainly help with that."

Kimball said the herbal medicine and acupuncture also can help with today's COVID-19 pandemic. Though she doesn't claim to be able to cure it, she certainly can help.

"Yes, I can help with the symptoms of COVID-19.

Last March, when it became a big thing and it came out of China, and of course Chinese medicine is out of China and all these formulas were developed around trying to treat the symptoms of COVID, such as the lung issues and things like that,"

she said. "I really haven't had the opportunity to treat somebody who's lost their taste or smell, but I do think acupuncture's going to help and there have been some articles that've come out about it. I just haven't had anybody come into my clinic. Thankfully, it hasn't been a huge issue in our county until recently, so I haven't had a ton of people come in for treatment for it. But I do think it can help some of the residual effects (of contracting the virus)."

Kimball said most insurance plans cover treatment at her clinic, including Medicaid. However, there's still work to be done to get Medicare to cover it.

Still, demand for the integrated health care she offers is growing.

"It's amazing the demand there is for a different form of health care, so I have grown exponentially in four years," Kimball said. "I have grown because people want something different than just a pill. They want something different than surgery. They want more wellness. They want more natural medicine. They want an alternative. I think that's why our business has grown as much as it has."

*Bill Bradshaw is a reporter for the Wallowa County Chieftain. Have a business tip? Contact him at 541-398-5503 or bbradshaw@wallowa.com.*



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