Community Ministry Update

Traditionally, when we visited the 
doctor for whatever ailed us the doc-
tor either prescribed medicine or 
scheduled surgery. Over the years, 
the number of people interested in 
more wholistic approaches to their 
health and wellness have increased. 
Herbal remedies such as echinacea, 
gingko biloba and St. John’s Wort 
have grown in recognition and use. 
Enrollment in yoga classes has in-
creased as well as vitamin and pro-
tein-fortified juice drink sales at the 
local health food store.

At Advocate Health Care, we have 
always had a wholistic philosophy 
grounding our mission to serve the 
health needs of individuals, families 
and communities. This philosophy 
means we understand people have 
physical, emotional and spiritual 
needs and that their relationship with 
God, themselves, their families and 
society are as vital to health and heal-
ing as standard medical therapies.

In this issue we look at complemen-
tary and alternative medicines and 
share with you some of the programs 
offered at Advocate. We hope that 
you will read about something suited 
for you, or that you might find help-
ful to members of your congregation.

Rev. Delois Brown-Daniels 
Vice President 
Advocate Community Ministry

Center for Complementary Medicine

What is complementary medicine?
The terms “alternative” and 
“complementary” medicines might be 
growing in usage in the American 
lexicon as more patients become in-
terested in being more involved in 
their medical treatments. However, 
don’t confuse one for the other. Ac-
cording to Donald Novey, M.D., fam-
ily practitioner and director of the 
Center for Complementary Medi-
cine, on the campus of Lutheran Gen-
eral Hospital in Park Ridge, there is a 
difference. He describes alternative 
medicine as natural medicine that 
may be used alone, such as acupunc-
ture and Chinese herbs. Complemen-
tary medicine is the integrative blend-
ing of mainstream and alternative 
medicine to treat conditions such as 
cancer, coronary heart disease, Alz-
heimer’s disease and allergies.

Advocate opened the Center for 
Complementary Medicine in August, 
1998 to provide standard and alterna-
tive medical therapies. Since Febru-
ary 2000, physicians doing their 
residency training at Lutheran Gen-
eral can opt to include complemen-
tary medicine as part of their rota-
tion.

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Another program Advocate offers is the **Strong Spirit Wellness and Integrative Medicine Center** at Illinois Masonic Medical Center, under the direction of David Moore, D.O., a physician board-certified in internal medicine and holistic medicine.

Strong Spirit also offers a comprehensive program of complementary healing therapies and mainstream medical care. However, since the philosophy at Strong Spirit is to look at everything—alternative treatment and traditional medical care with equal integrity in addressing the patient’s health and wellness needs, the practitioners there prefer the term “integrative medicine” to complementary medicine.

Strong Spirit incorporates the knowledge and skills of board-certified physicians, nurses, psychotherapists and alternative therapists cooperatively with the patient to develop an individualized program that will most effectively improve his or her health and well-being.

When asked how the mind and body work in relation to healing, Dr. Moore stated that, “Thoughts and feelings affect how your body reacts and your body affects how you think. When you have a gut feeling, it is really part of your mind.” So, if you are feeling stressed, your body responds. However, if you remain long-term in a state of chronic stress, bodily functions that protect your health will begin to deteriorate. “Relaxation and deep breathing work to calm the mind that produces changes in the body that produce healing,” stated Dr. Moore.

On the subject of spirituality and its relationship to health and healing, Dr. Moore believes that having a connection to something greater also facilitates healing. “The greatest single predictor of illness, from the common cold to risk of death to elderly patients, is social isolation. We need to be connected, whether it’s family, church or something else,” said Dr. Moore.

Strong Spirit offers educational workshops, healing arts programs, support groups and information and tools an individual needs to achieve his or her best possible level of well-being every day and for the rest of their lives.

Strong Spirit also offers a residential retreat on spirituality for gay men utilizing yoga, imagery, meditation, art and social support.

### Using Prayer to Fight Heart Disease

African American men are 26 percent more likely than white men to die of heart disease, according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and West Virginia University. However, help may be just a prayer line away. Several studies have found that prayer and meditation may help to reduce atherosclerosis in African Americans, which is a leading cause of cardiovascular disease.

Researchers at Duke University Medical Center found in a recent study that black participants who regularly practiced their faith had blood-pressure readings six to seven points lower than blacks that were less religiously active. An earlier Duke study had already found that blacks who attended church regularly and studied the Bible or prayed daily had a 40 percent lower blood pressure than those who were less religious.

An unrelated study by researchers from the University of California at Los Angeles and Charles Drew University of Medicine and Science in Los Angeles and Maharishi University of Management College of Maharishi Vedic Medicine in Fairfield, Iowa, found that transcendental meditation may reduce atherosclerosis, the fatty build up on artery walls that causes them to become thicker, increasing the risk of a heart attack or stroke.

The researchers followed black men and women at risk for cardiovascular disease for a seven-month period. Some of the participants engaged in transcendental meditation while the others were placed in a control group. At the end of the study, researchers measured the arterial walls of the participants using ultrasound. The fatty deposits on the arterial walls of the meditating group decreased, while the control group’s deposits actually increased.

Each of the study’s findings suggests that “religious coping,” relying on one’s faith in an active way to manage life’s stresses, may help lower the risk of cardiovascular disease in African Americans.
Residents that choose this elective are able to observe board certified practitioners combine the best of traditional and alternative treatments. They are exposed to therapies such as chiropractic care, massage therapy, acupuncture, homeopathic medicine, mind-body integration, western herbal and vitamin/supplement therapy.

**Why complementary medicine?**
Dr. Novey asserts that mainstream treatment has its limits, but when you combine standard medical care with alternative therapies, the number of useful tools to help treat a patient increases and you can solve problems that can’t be solved by using other means. Complementary medicine is wholistic therapy, so when a physician refers a patient to the Center, his or her total wellness is taken into account by one of the Center’s certified physicians, including physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. The alternative medicine practitioner then makes a diagnosis and consults with the patient’s physician any recommended treatment plans.

However, the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health ([www.nccam.nih.gov](http://www.nccam.nih.gov)) cautions that individuals get a cost estimate before beginning alternative medicine treatments because many such therapies are not reimbursed by standard health insurance.

**Where does spirituality fit in?**
Dr. Novey suggested that a person with a reason to live may live longer and healthier. “It is quite clear that meaning drives us to be healthy and take advantage of the gift of life.”

Dr. Novey often speaks widely to groups on complementary medicine and is available to share his insights. For more information, see the Upcoming Events section in this newsletter.

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**Other Advocate Alternative Health Programs**

Many Advocate hospitals provide wholistic medicine—the integrative blending of alternative and traditional medical treatments as an option. Our physicians and complementary-care specialists work together to provide the best care for the mind, body and spirit.

**Christ Medical Center Acupuncture**
A painless procedure that uses needles inserted into specific areas of the body and heat or electrical stimulation to help the body heal.

**Massage Therapy**
Ongoing therapy offered at the Women’s Health Center, Tinley Park. The fee is $45.

**Tai Chi**
This eight-week continuation course practices individual forms of Tai Chi. Ongoing, call for dates and times. Also at the Women’s Health Center. The fee is $80.

**Good Samaritan Hospital**
Offers Tai Chi, Hatha Yoga, Flow Yoga, Pilates Mat and other classes at the Wellness Center.

**Illinois Masonic Medical Center**

**Drumming Circle**
Reduce stress and increase energy using drumming and meditation. Next session is December 8, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. The fee is $25.

All Advocate sites offer programs on wellness. Call 1.800.3.ADVOCATE or visit “Classes and Screenings” on Advocate’s website at [www.advocatehealth.com](http://www.advocatehealth.com).
The Community Ministry Office of Advocate Health Care seeks to make real the vision of wholistic health—abundant life for all—by collaborating with community agents and congregations from all denominations and religious affiliations. By offering opportunities for training and education, consultation, resource linking, program development and networking, Advocate Community Ministry supports congregations and community organizations as vital agents in creating communities of wholeness and healing.

Advocate Health Care is a faith-based health care system in the Chicagoland area grounded in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) and the United Church of Christ (UCC). Comprised of 8 hospitals, numerous neighborhood clinics, a home health care and hospice organization, and many other sites of care, Advocate’s mission is to serve the health needs of individuals, families and communities through a wholistic philosophy rooted in a fundamental understanding of human beings as created in the image of God.

Upcoming Events

National Donor Sabbath, November 9-11, 2001... During this time, all of us are encouraged to consider the importance of organ, tissue and eye donation for lifesaving and life-enhancing transplantation. For more information contact Mike Henderson, Public Education Coordinator, at 888.307.3668 or visit their website at www.robi.org.

State of Race & Poverty Conference and 2001 Annual Meeting of the Community Renewal Society... Saturday, November 10, 2001, 8:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., Malcolm X College, 1900 W. Van Buren. The conference theme is “American Healthcare: A Poverty of Values.” For more information or to register call 312.427.4830 ext. 2006.

The Benefits of Acupuncture and Other Alternative Therapies...Join Igoni Dokubo, M.D., Monday, November 12, 6 to 7:30 p.m., Bethany Hospital, in a discussion on how you might benefit from a variety of alternative medicine options. To register for this free class, call 1.800.3.ADVOCATE.

Keeping Your Holidays Joyful: Nutrition and Stress Management for the Holiday Season...Wednesday, November 14, 2001, 7:30 p.m. Center for Complementary Medicine in the Nesset Pavilion. In this session, Dr. Novey and staff will show you practical ways to reduce stress and increase enjoyment for the holidays. Specifics will be given on good nutrition, healthy holiday eating, keeping a balance with the holiday “workload”, controlling stress, and how to revive tired shopping backs and feet. The session is free, however, pre-registration is required. For more information or to register call 847.318.2860.

December 1 is the 14th World AIDS Day...This year’s theme is “I Care. Do You?” World AIDS Day is an opportunity to raise HIV awareness and funds for educational materials and medical research. Contact your local HIV/AIDS organizations for observances in your area.