

SPRING 2012 | Living well, from Victor to Naples

CANANDAIGUA

magazine

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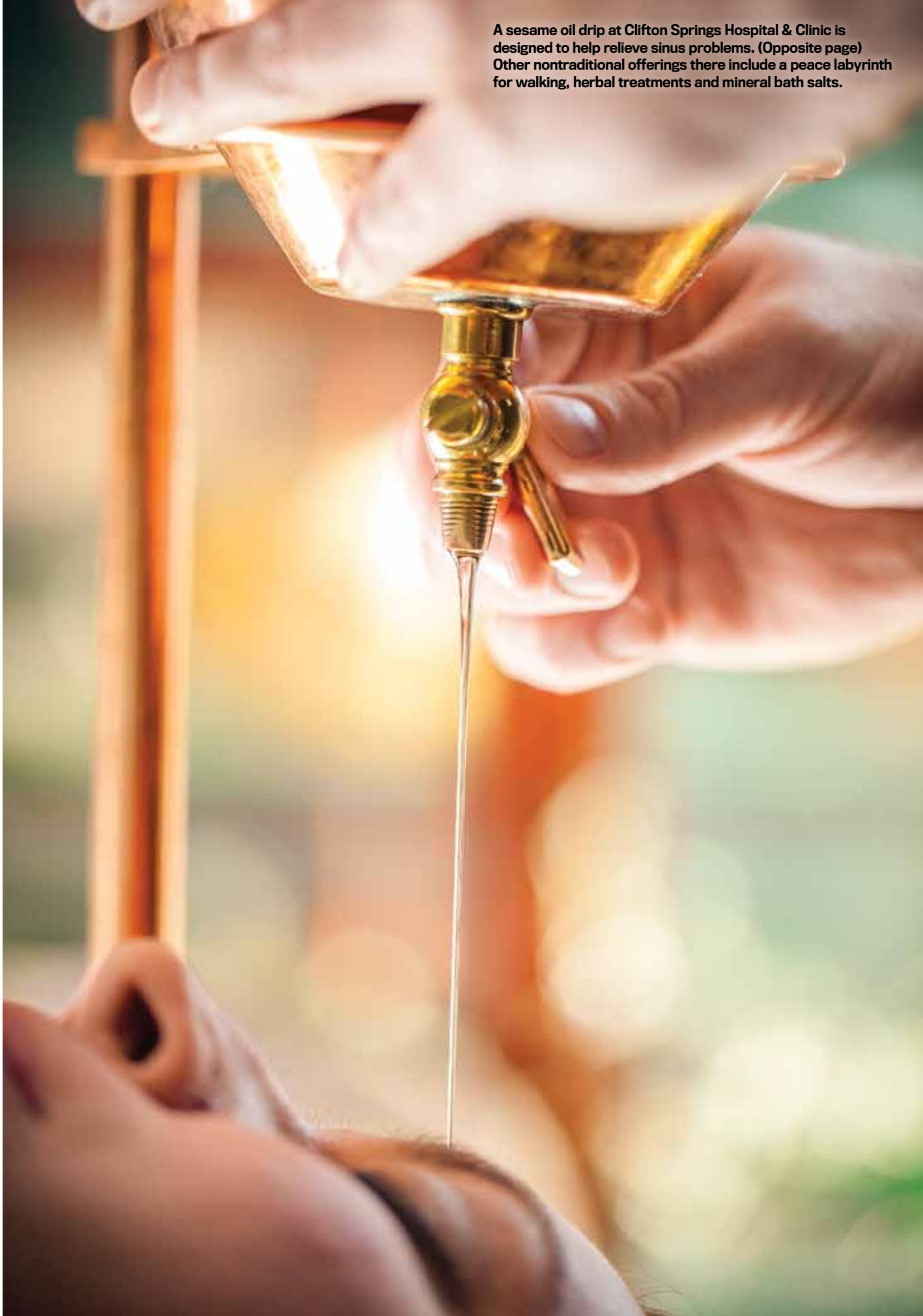
The new
look of *Wellness*

Local Hospitals are
Leading the Way:
What It Means for You



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A sesame oil drip at Clifton Springs Hospital & Clinic is designed to help relieve sinus problems. (Opposite page) Other nontraditional offerings there include a peace labyrinth for walking, herbal treatments and mineral bath salts.



Yoga? Mineral baths? Music therapy? Our region's hospitals are redefining how to keep us healthy



The new look of wellness

Story by **Marci Diehl** | Photos by **Matt Wittmeyer**

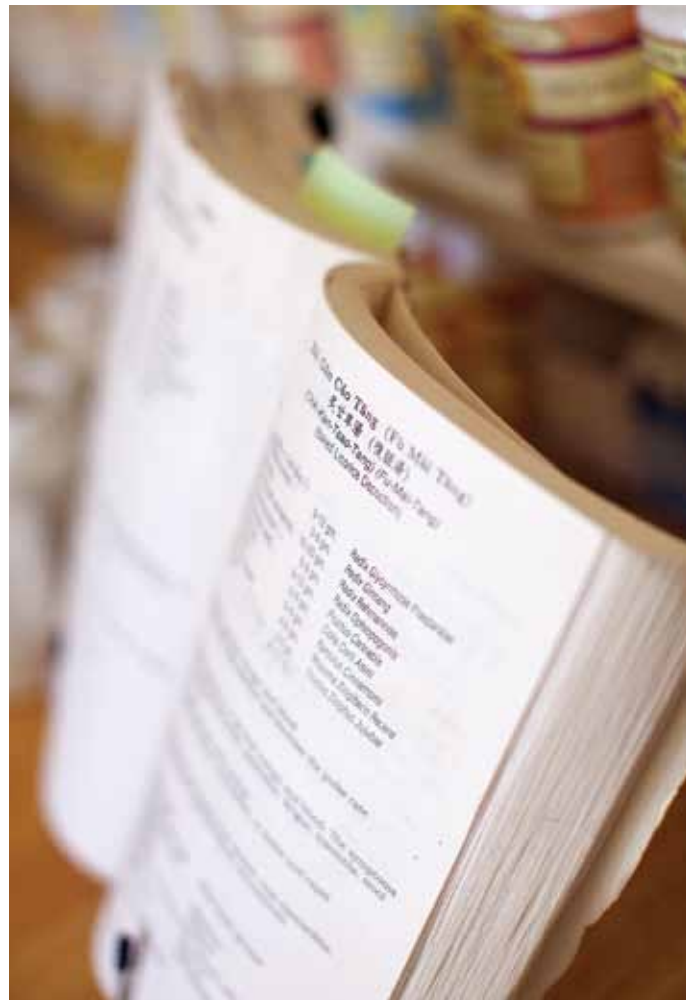
THREE HUNDRED YEARS AGO, A CONCEPT OF “WELLNESS”—WHOLENESS OF MIND, BODY and spirit—already existed in this region. The Seneca Nation identified places where they believed waters healed and restored. Our area was a frontier both in terms of land and ideas, and pioneers were drawn to it.

Fast-forward to today. Three community hospitals—each within 15 miles of each other—are pioneering a mind/body/spirit wellness complement to health care. Canandaigua’s Thompson Health, Clifton Springs Hospital & Clinic, and Finger Lakes Health/Geneva General Hospital all have evolved a philosophy that combines traditional medical treatment with complementary therapies, integrative medicine and education. Some therapies are relatively modern; others go back 5,000 years.

Yoga classes... a peace labyrinth for walking... prayers offered by nurses before surgery... programs to teach school kids how to shop for healthy foods at a farmer’s



In the dispensary at Clifton Springs, a special herbal recipe book is used for the blending of remedies. The herbs are then placed in capsules.



market. Tibetan Shirodhara massage. These are the kinds of things that have become available, right alongside the best of traditional Western medicine.

Why us? Why here?

One reason is an ideal location. “Our hospitals get to be cutting-edge,” says Jose Acevedo, M.D., president and CEO of Finger Lakes Health. “We’re ‘rural America,’ but we’re still in New York state, close to major academic centers and within driving distance to New York City. A 135-bed hospital here is very different than a 135-bed hospital in Wyoming.”

The level of investment in integrative medicine here is beyond even the larger urban hospital systems in Rochester. Health care professionals say that smaller hospitals with a more cohesive staff are more likely to give a chance to the non-medical options that patients request.

And Linda Farchione, president and CEO of Thompson Health, says community hospitals in the region have a “common unity,” which—in the competitive world of health care—isn’t always the case. Area hospitals come together, each in a different way, and work with the Ontario County Department of Public Health to augment and learn from each other. This avoids duplication of services and gives people more choices in being active, educated health consumers.

Tradition vs. wellness

It wasn’t always like this. Once upon a time, health care meant medical, surgical and pharmaceutical. In large part, the approach came from a mid-century shift away from the passed-down natural remedies and home treatments from decades before. The 1980s brought HMOs, which divvied up treatment into insurance “parts”: medical, dental, mental. That brought a further shift away from holistic medicine.

So it’s no surprise that some physicians are still wary of anything outside of traditional Western medicine.



“The word wellness makes some feel uncomfortable,” says Brian Justice, D.C., of the Rochester Chiropractic Group and former company chiropractor for Wegmans. “They can associate it with the kind of stuff you see on a Sunday morning infomercial that has no truth, evidence or quality research whatsoever.”

But many physicians with practices at both the University of Rochester Medical Center (URMC) and community hospitals here have first-hand experience in using

Clifton Springs uses a blend of frankincense and myrrh to steep like tea. Then a cloth is soaked in the liquid and placed on the body like a compress to ease pain symptoms.



(Opposite page) Oils are shelved at the dispensary at Clifton Springs. (Right) Hibiscus is added to the blend of minerals for the Himalayan bath.

integrative medicine. Pediatrician and URM professor O.J. Sahler, M.D., was instrumental in creating The Center for Body Mind Complementary Therapies at Thompson. Lewis Zulick, M.D., is a surgeon, URM faculty member and the vice president for Medical Affairs at Clifton. They and their colleagues are well aware of the thousands of studies, effects and results of using integrative therapies in conjunction with traditional medicine.

“We try to intervene at the least invasive level ... The body has an innate ability to heal itself. It’s designed for it.”

Zulick works closely with The Springs Integrative Medicine & Spa Center’s medical director, Les Moore. The Springs became a dedicated wing within Clifton Springs Hospital & Clinic in 2004. Having an entire wing of a hospital devoted to integrative medicine is unusual, Zulick says: “The acceptance among the medical staff is remarkable.”

Zulick uses the therapies himself, and he sends his patients at Clifton’s Cancer Center there who are “going through rough treatments,” he says.

Hospitals have pharmaceutical dispensaries. Clifton has two: one for

Soaked

My Himalayan adventure at Clifton Springs

This bath was 5,000 years in the making. I was neck-deep in one of the big soaking tubs at the Springs Integrative Medicine Center & Spa. Peaceful music played. And I wouldn’t be disturbed for the next 20 minutes.

My head told me, “Remember the details; this is research.” My body replied, “Be quiet! I’m relaxing, and this hot water feels goooood.”

I had opted for one of the center’s new Ayurvedic services, the Himalayan mineral bath. The water was infused with Himalayan salts, herbs and a blend of essential oils—a recipe inspired by the 5,000-year-old tradition from India and Tibet. According to Ayurvedic principles, our bodies possess three basic energy types, called doshas. The Himalayan mineral soak is touted as a way to detoxify, calm and get your energies back in balance.

The tub was big enough to float in, with two sets of taps labeled “Mineral Water” and “Regular Water.” Around me in the room was a private bath with shower, massage table and table and chairs for consults. An antique cabinet held a collection of Native American art.

The water was hot and clear. (The therapist had told me to adjust the temperature with the tap water if I needed, and to ring if I had palpitations.) The music felt like it was flowing through me.

After 20 minutes, a knock came on the door. Back to reality. I hoisted myself to the side of the tub and—whoa! Every muscle in my body felt like it had turned to gelatin. I was sweating. It was a major effort to struggle back into my clothes. Something had hit my doshas like a ton of bricks.

I wobbled out of the room and to the desk to thank medical director Les Moore and the staff. I hoped I didn’t look drunk.

“How do you feel? Did you like it?” They asked.

“Wonderful,” I said. “I’ll be back.” But all I could think was, “I still have to walk to the lobby! I don’t know if my legs will work—they feel so rubbery.”

I managed to float out of the center and find my car. Thank goodness—at least I could sit down.

Back home, I tried to get back to work. I ended up sitting like a statue at my desk. My mind had shut down. My muscles felt like noodles. Must. Lie. Down.

I fell into a deep sleep for an hour and a half. I don’t think I’ve been that relaxed since I was on vacation on a Greek island in 2004. I slept well that night, too. The next day brought a peaceful, mellow feeling. And I went to bed at 8 that next night.

Would I do it again? In a heartbeat. But next time, I won’t try to do anything afterward. Rejuvenating and balancing your doshas is enough for one day’s “work.”

— Marci Diehl





(From left) Tina Culver, instructor Alicia Barnes, Sandy Lesperance and Ariel Demas assume a yoga pose at the Thompson Conference Center in Canandaigua. Thompson offers numerous wellness classes to the general public through its Center for Body Mind Complementary Therapies.

pharmaceuticals, the other for herbal and Chinese medicine. It's not your typical drugstore aisle of supplements. Large glass containers line the upper shelves, full of some familiar and some not-at-all familiar roots, leaves, flowers and seeds that are compounded into medicine. Otherwise, the bottles and boxes look exactly like their hospital pharmacy counterparts.

The 'why' behind it

When HMOs came into the picture, some dictated to physicians that they spend no more than eight to 12 minutes per patient. That's when the use of complementary therapies began to rise, Sahler says.

"Compare that with 20 minutes or more of a hands-on treatment like massage, where a patient-consumer is able to feel truly cared for," she explains. "People would rather spend money on modalities that give one-on-one attention and caring."

Another attraction, Sahler and Moore point out, is that there are no side effects with complementary therapies. In fact, some of these treatments are used to ease side effects that come with traditional medical treatments.

"We try to intervene at the least invasive level," says Moore, a licensed acupuncturist, naturopath and a Doctor of Oriental Medicine. "The body has an innate ability to heal itself. It's designed for it."

For Moore and his fellow physicians, wellness options fit perfectly into the "First, do no harm" philosophy of medicine. For those who want to lose weight or stop smoking, there's hypnotherapy, Chinese herbal medicine or acupuncture to try. For back pain, neck pain, headaches or tension, practitioners use chiropractic care, reiki, massage and craniosacral therapy. These

therapies, says Moore, are cheaper, less invasive and often more effective. And anyone can opt for them, no prescription needed.

Sinus problems are common in our region, so The Springs now offers nasya, an Ayurvedic treatment that uses hydrotherapy, aromatherapy, accupressure and massage techniques. Of course, the fact that it's from Ayurveda, the 5,000-year-old system of health and longevity from Indian and Tibetan medicine, will make it more or less appealing, depending on where a patient's attitude falls on the traditional-wellness spectrum.

Clifton Springs Hospital has a more than 150-year-old history of whole-person philosophy, plus a "medical geology" link throughout the Finger Lakes region with healing springs in Geneva, Dansville and Watkins Glen. But only Clifton grew to become an internationally known medical spa. Its springs contain sulfur, saline, magnesium sulfate, calcium, silica and carbonic acid. Soaking in that mineral-rich spring water, at the least, is used as an antidote to modern-day stress.

Speaking of stress...

Seventy to 80 percent of doctor visits today come from stress-related symptoms, says Jerry DeLuccio, CEO of EnhancedCareMD.com, a Rochester-based portal with a database of information and a suite of services for primary care practices. Emotional and spiritual issues become physical issues. Think: high blood pressure, chronic pain, headaches, stomach problems, anxiety, depression.

If stress is understood as a toxic assault on our entire being, the idea of "wellness" encompassing the well-being of the entire person—mind, body and spirit—makes sense.

When people come into a hospital—



PROVIDED PHOTO

New rooms at Geneva General, like this model from the builder working on the hospital's expansion project, are based on a philosophy of environmental design for healing. To avoid a clinical feel, patient rooms will feature artwork, rich textures, a calming color palette and an area for family members.

even when they're not the patients—they're often full of fear, notes Dr. Acevedo of Finger Lakes Health. Everyone goes into a state of stress—even physicians when their loved ones are involved. He explains how he reacted when his son went through surgery: "You become like Velcro, in a protective mode," he says.

He sees the patient-family relationship as a key in healing. Geneva General is in the midst of a \$56-million expansion that will incorporate a philosophy of environmental design for healing, along with a change in the culture of patient and family care. The expansion is scheduled for completion in 2013.

It's a matter of changing hospital culture, Acevedo says. "For example, the 'old way' had the doctor or nurses talking to the family 30 minutes before discharge and dumping a bunch of information on them, when they've been excluded up until then. But who has the most impact on the healing of a human being: The

doctor or the relatives? We can improve healing by teaming with the family members."

The culture of the Geneva community—one of large, close families—is helping to shape the design of the hospital's expansion. All rooms will be private and include a family suite area for loved ones to stay overnight, with a functional space and amenities of their own. Geneva General is even bringing in consultants from The Ritz Carlton Hotel to train administrative staff.

Innovative approaches like these are part of our region's healing history. Back in the 19th century, when Dr. Henry Foster founded his "Water Cure Sanitarium" in Clifton Springs, he was already ahead in understanding how the mind and spirit affected the body. Patients received medical care during the day and spiritual readings in the evening. Fifty years before Freud, the hospital offered mental therapy.

When Farchione became CEO of Thompson Health in 1991, one of the first things she developed was a chaplaincy program for the hospital. As a former nurse focused on behavioral and community health, she saw this as an added wellness value.

The Rev. Dick McCaughey was hired to create the chaplaincy program, which now has 30 to 40 active volunteers who undergo a rigorous training program developed by McCaughey.

Among the program's most popular service is prayer at the bedside. According to Randy Jacque, Thompson's director of health, 24,000 people a year request it.

"The agenda is the patient," Jacque says. "We're not giving religion—we're giving support."

In 1999, chaplaincy service was named one of four "Outstanding Volunteer Programs" by the New York State Association of Directors of Volunteer Services. But the work didn't stop there. Nurses then brought a new idea to McCaughey—an optional

"There are lots of choices. When you have choices, you feel more in control, more of a partnership in your own health."

nondenominational prayer with the patient, read by a nurse before surgery if the patient chooses. For a community hospital, it would be a truly unusual offering. But McCaughey liked it, and he helped them develop a prayer and protocol.

The nurses "see patients calmed by it," Jacque says. "There's a connection made."

McCaughey also developed the program Healing Pathways, now in its 13th year. The eight-week group experience focuses on reducing stress and making behavioral changes that can improve relaxation, change negative patterns of thinking, strengthen spirituality and build skills to manage the

stressors that can impair a person's quality of life.

"Spirituality is not talking about religion," McCaughey emphasizes. "It's about giving meaning and purpose to our lives, having a sense of connection and belonging. Connection fosters healing. Disconnection and isolation can be as damaging to your health as smoking."

Physical therapist Jennifer Klein is the co-presenter of Healing Pathways. These days, she sees the effects of stress extending even to schoolchildren. Kids are living lives without any downtime—a chance to play outside or just do nothing, she says. And they're showing up with migraines and high blood pressure as a result.

Simply beautiful.

It's how you should feel when you walk out the door each morning.

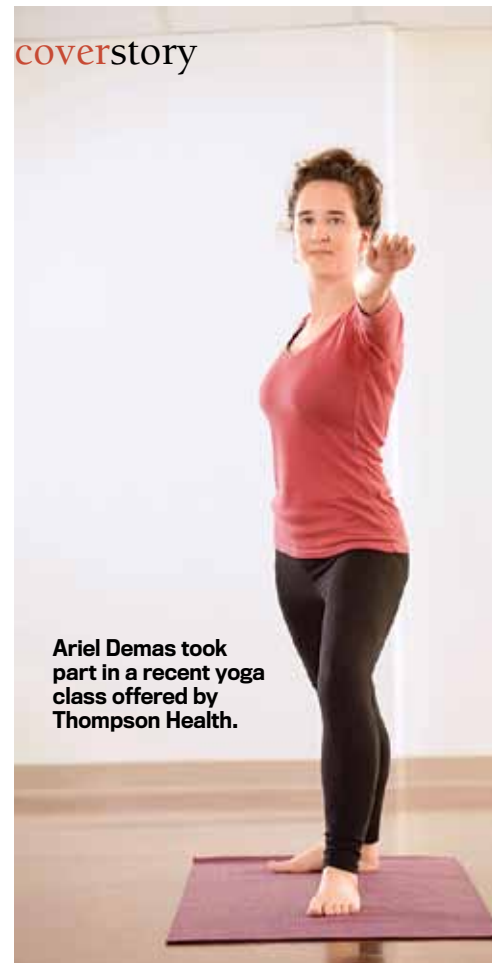
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Ariel Demas took part in a recent yoga class offered by Thompson Health.

Advocates say that complementary therapies that boost endorphins and reduce stress—gentle yoga, massage, meditation, mineral soaks, Ayurveda techniques, support groups, music therapy, humor workshops or even scrapbooking for a cause—can boost our immune systems, making them more effective.

“People in a relaxed state have less ‘lag time’ in their immunologic function,” Dr. Sahler says. “We need to teach lifelong skills to cope with stress.”

Hospital as classroom

All three hospitals offer a wide variety of classes and programs in their communities. Part of their mission is preventive medicine so that people don’t become ill in the first place.

Thompson starts with children. Its “Get Up, Fuel Up” program works with

school systems to educate kids about healthy eating. A class might take a trip to the grocery store to become “food detectives,” learning to read labels and make good choices for their health. Or they might visit a local farmers market. The program encourages kids to talk about issues, get exercise and talk about healthy food choices at home.

Mothers can take prenatal yoga at Thompson and then join the “1st Time Around Moms” support group. Like all the hospitals, Thompson has support groups for many chronic conditions and needs. There are classes on weight loss. You can mall-walk with a group at Eastview, do gentle yoga or work up a sweat with Vinyasa yoga. Thompson also offers “Golf Fitness” and the WIPP program—Warmup for Injury Prevention and Performance—for athletes.

“Spirit of Women” is Thompson’s special concentration on women’s health, with an emphasis on making it a top priority. It recognizes that, as primary caretakers, women often put their own health and wellness on the back burner. So there are special events and health fairs—“Stress Less,” “Day of Dance,” “Girls Night Out”—along with the DASH Diet for reduced salt intake to combat high blood pressure.


Clifton Springs Hospital has programs for botanical medicine certification and homeopathy. It encourages people to get into geocaching for fun and exercise. The hospital is well known for hosting AA and AlAnon meetings, in keeping with its long history of substance abuse recovery programs. Both Clifton and Thompson have held “Croppin’ for a Cure” scrapbooking events to raise funds for good causes while providing community members with a day to enjoy their hobby together.

At Geneva General, “Dine & Discuss” is one of its most popular programs. These are talks given by medical specialists, held at locations such as Belhurst Castle with dinner included. Education and support groups bring together people suffering from ailments such as strokes, diabetes and arthritis. Another popular program—“Walk & Talk”—starts in June, bringing participants together for weekly walks over five months and tracking their steps and resulting health benefits.

Even the wealth of choices available plays into the notion of wellness.

“People want to feel cared for, listened to and supported,” Jacque says. “There are lots of choices. When you have choices, you feel more in control, more of a partnership in your own health.”

EnhancedCareMD.com’s statistics confirm that a healthy, educated consumer has a better outcome in his or her health and wellness—and ends up spending less money for it.

Again, the idea of choice means it’s not either/or for health treatment here. We have the luxury of access to the best of both traditional and complementary medicine. As has been the case for hundreds of years here, this is a place of health pioneers. 





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