

survey, and 23 said they could not sustain a viable practice if it were not for the extra OR time offered by the Cambie Surgery Centre. So we have actually retained 23 doctors. So this goes completely against the argument we are going to take away from the public system. The private sector will allow these people to stay and work. (Dr. Brian Day, oral communication, April 17, 2012)

As the debate over private for-profit health care continues, one thing is certain—this form of health service already exists in Canada—Dr. Day's Cambie Surgery Centre is a prime example. Its future effects on our unique Canadian system will not only be determined by a few select physicians and government policy makers, but also medical students, as the future physicians of this country. 

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InspireHealth: Physicians Providing Integrative Cancer Care

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The treatment for cancer can be debilitating. In addition to the physical tolls, the psychosocial and financial challenges can make the patient's experience even more daunting. This may contribute to why up to 85% of patients with advanced stages of cancer seek complimentary therapies.¹ Recognizing the need for more support during cancer care, InspireHealth, Canada's only government sponsored cancer care center, was initiated in 1997.² The physicians of InspireHealth are trained in family medicine and work alongside a multidisciplinary team to supplement traditional treatments with programs in nutrition, exercise, and psychosocial well-being.² Dr. Theresa Clarke, a UBC Medical School graduate, is a physician at InspireHealth. In this interview, Dr. Clarke explains her current role at InspireHealth and how she got there:

Medicine is incredibly flexible. I was practicing as a GP [General Practitioner] for ten years, but felt that I wanted to spend more time with my family. I decided to stop practicing as a GP and trained in acupuncture, which led to a private practice. After a few years I applied for a position on a rehabilitation team. I didn't need any special training at the time and my role was mainly to assess chronic pain. After four years of working in rehab, I joined the InspireHealth team. (Dr. Clarke, personal communication, March 27, 2012)

Dr. Clarke explains how her daily routine allows her to build long-standing partnerships with patients:

We start off each day with a group meditation. Afterwards, I consult with up to five patients. Each session lasts up to 90 minutes, and any follow-ups are 30 minutes. The focus is to learn everything about the patient so we can help supplement their medical treatment with self-care, nutrition, and mind-body coaching. It's great for the patients. I find that I know them better after that first session than

I did after seeing them for ten years as a GP. (Dr. Clarke, personal communication, March 27, 2012)

Developing and implementing a variety of programs is what she enjoys most:

I really love being able to facilitate workshops and programs relating to anything from nutrition to mind-body coaching. Also, I get to attend and talk at many community awareness campaigns. I get to do all this with an amazing team. (Dr. Clarke, personal communication, March 27, 2012)

Despite the increasing demand for supportive care and research showing that a holistic approach improves quality of life in cancer patients,¹ Dr. Clarke explains that the most challenging part of her career is the stigma towards complimentary medicine and the attitudes of other physicians:

Our biggest challenge is that we still struggle to get referrals from oncologists and GP's. There's a stigma that we might interfere with their treatments. Reality is, we would never alter any treatment but only serve to guide the patient through their journey. I hope this stigma changes in the future because right now we are still relying on word of mouth. The biggest complaint from patients is why they did not hear about us sooner. (Dr. Clarke, personal communication, March 27, 2012)

Dr. Clarke encourages future physicians interested in incorporating some of these values into their career to join their mentor group or take an elective with InspireHealth as a medical student or family practice resident. 

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