



North Dakota facility trolling for Manitoba patients

Going south of the border is nothing new to Manitobans looking for a bargain, but now residents of southern Manitoba are heading 150 km south to Grafton, North Dakota, for a different reason: diagnostic tests. Since late September, the DMS Imaging Centre has been welcoming patients from north of the border for MRI and CT scans and ultrasound tests.

“We assessed Canadian physicians and found many frustrated doctors,” says Steve Sveningson, project development coordinator for DMS Imaging Inc. “We were approached first by some Manitoba doctors and [then] we talked with many in southern Manitoba who had patients upset because they couldn’t get an image [taken] and this delayed the diagnosis. We’re testing the market now — I don’t know yet if there’s enough frustration with the delays.”

“At the moment people have a bit

of a wait-and-see attitude,” commented Dr. Ian White, president of the Manitoba Medical Association. “Clearly there is government under-spending on diagnostic [tests] and we are hopelessly undersupplied in advanced diagnostics. We need more MRI and CT scanners. Our waiting lists for nonurgent assessments are unacceptably long.”

“All we do is imaging,” added Sveningson. “We would have preferred to offer Manitoba [Health] our services, to do this in Manitoba and

A Toronto doctor gets right to the point

Despite the reservations of traditionalists, a growing number of Canadian doctors are incorporating complementary medicine into their practices. The work of Dr. Linda Rapson of Toronto offers 1 example, but she is different from most because she has been offering acupuncture treatment since the early 1970s, long before most physicians had paid any attention to such alternatives.

Rapson, who operates a pain-management clinic, says her interest in acupuncture grew after her mother-in-law responded well to the therapy after experiencing severe and chronic neck pain. At the time Rapson, a 1965 graduate of the University of Toronto, was in a group practice. Impressed by the seeming efficacy of acupuncture, she took courses offered by the Acupuncture Foundation of Canada (AFC). Today training is offered by the Acupuncture Foundation of Canada Institute — Rapson is the executive president — and in the US. She began offering the treatment to her own and to colleagues’ patients, and was so impressed with the results that she assumed a position in 1975 as 1 of 2

full-time physicians at an acupuncture clinic founded and run by the AFC. She remained there for 2



Rapson: Acupuncture entering mainstream?

years, leaving in 1977 to open a private acupuncture practice with Dr. Carmen Kong.

In 1979 Rapson entered solo practice, opening the Rapson Pain Clinic. She felt the clinic, by employing others skilled in comple-

mentary methods, could offer a variety of approaches to pain management. In 1994 she was joined by a traditionally trained Chinese physician, Yun Ye, who practises both acupuncture and Chinese medicine involving herbs.

Rapson brought her interest and expertise to her appointment as the first chair of the Health Services Advisory Committee at Toronto’s Casey House hospice for AIDS patients, which offers many complementary therapies. Since 1992 she has been a consultant to the acupuncture clinic at Toronto’s Lyndhurst Hospital, which specializes in the treatment of spinal chord injuries and rehabilitation.

Rapson, who teaches across Canada for the AFC Institute and has taught and lectured around the world, says acupuncture has experienced a remarkable transformation. “It has gone from the status of almost quackery to being considered mainstream by a lot of physicians. Many MDs who would not have considered acupuncture as an option now see it as a first-line treatment.” © — *Roger Burford Mason*