To life, and the pursuit of wellness

Practice finds success with integrative approach to medicine

by DANIEL R. VERDON, Group Content Director

The Whole Child Center, in Oradell, New Jersey, combines traditional pediatric care services with an integrative approach to wellness. Some of its less-traditional services include: infant massage, nutritional counseling, clinical homeopathy, yoga and mind/body therapies.

HE WANTS TO CHANGE THE WORLD—one patient at a time.

In fact, pediatrician and author Lawrence Rosen, MD, of Oradell, New Jersey, founder of the Whole Child Center, combines a traditional practice in less-than traditional ways. The practice says it blends integrative medicine with ecologically sustainable healthcare for children and families.

“We are struggling in healthcare to do just that—to create health,” Rosen explains. “Not just cheaper care, but better care. What does it mean to be healthier? At the same time we need to recognize that there are significant economic difficulties in our healthcare system.” As a result, healthcare needs wholesale changes as it relates to how and why pediatricians and family physicians provide healthcare, Rosen says.

Consider the types of diseases most primary care physicians are seeing—obesity, asthma, autism, attention deficit disorder, metabolic disorders in adults. “We are treating sicker and sicker people later in life with after-the-fact solutions,” Rosen says. A truly preventive strategy, he adds, is not just patient-to-patient, but a philosophical decision we have to make as a country and as a society as it relates to long-term outcomes.

Rosen made the philosophical switch after 20 years of practice. The Whole Child Center, a four-physician practice with a pediatric nurse practitioner and clinical coordinator, combines traditional adult therapies with integrative approaches to nutrition, fitness, and mindfulness.

Similarly, the practice combines traditional pediatric care services with services...
such as nutritional counseling, acupuncture, clinical homeopathy, nutritional counseling, yoga, Reiki, infant massage, mind/body therapies (biofeedback, hypnosis, and guided imagery), and prenatal and preconception consultations.

The practice was built to help facilitate and enhance the relationship between its doctors, staff, and patients. Rosen, with Heather Jeney, MD; Stacey M. Linwood, MD; Penelope Gay Sheely, MD; Rebecca Ganz, CPNP; and Karen Overgaard are trying model healthy lifestyles early on for children and families.

It’s also about engaging patients. “We want to give patients a voice, empower them whether it’s using mobile technological solutions or access to their healthcare through a patient portal and guide them through solutions that promote wellness and health prevention,” Rosen says. During a typical 30-minute encounter, 25 minutes are spent with the physician. He calls it quality time. “We are trying to develop relationships over time, and that is exactly how communication develops, and it’s crucial to how we keep kids healthy,” he says.

The approach, Rosen adds, is really about engaging patients in many different ways. Physicians are educators, and their tools include not only a stethoscope but also patient health apps, lab reports, motivational communication, group meetings within the practice, classes, and special events. The technological tools available today to facilitate that communication are helping exponentially, Rosen adds.

Along with being considered one of the first green pediatric...
Going green

SO, WHAT IS A GREEN PRACTICE?

“It’s about being mindful of the [impact of the] environment on health and the impact of healthcare on the environment,” explains Lawrence Rosen, MD, founder of the Whole Child Center in Oradell, New Jersey.

The broad definition of a green design is a facility that uses materials that have been either recycled, produced locally, are energy conserving, and are non-toxic and non-allergenic. Rosen’s practice, considered one of the first green pediatric practices in the country, was designed by DRG Design Group. It uses everything from natural linoleum flooring tiles to PVC-free leather furniture to nontoxic stains and sealers.

PRACTICE WHAT YOU PREACH

Rx food
EAT REAL FOOD
Teach your kids that eating is a mindful process, one that is not only about ingesting calories but also about nourishing your body, mind, and soul. Eating is and ought to be a community activity.

Rx activity
MOVE YOUR BODY
“Experience what author Richard Louv calls the ‘transformative power of the natural world’ and refuse to let your children suffer from nature deficit disorder.”

Rx rest
MAKE SLEEP A PRIORITY
Create opportunities for rest, especially for teens. They always need far more sleep than they get.

Rx mindfulness
BE HERE NOW
Help your children build their stress-coping toolboxes. Take time to look someone in the eyes, listen to her story, and let her know that you hear her. Be willing to sit in the mud until it settles and the water clears.

THE GREEN EVOLUTION: The Whole Child Center is said to be one of the first “green” practices in the United States, and it uses everything from “enviroleather” to many energy-conserving building materials.