

Mind | Body | Spirit

CCNM Alumni Magazine Issue No. 17 – Summer 2016

CCNM's Newest Grads Step Out

Across North America,
CCNM grads are
making their mark



New graduate Kara Montz, New York State

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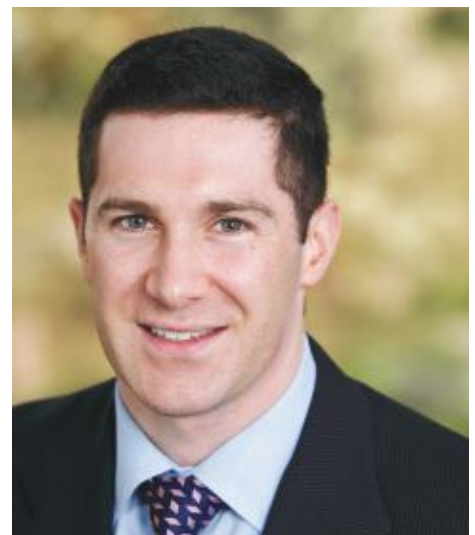
Cover photo: Class of 2016 graduate Kara Montz, of East Amherst, New York, after receiving her degree at CCNM's convocation on May 26.

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Editor's Letter

“Convocation represents the best of who we are, brought together in a moment of celebration.”

Simone Philogène

What does Convocation Really Mean?

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines convocation as “a meeting of the members of a college or university to observe a particular ceremony; the act of calling a group of people to a formal meeting.” For CCNM, convocation is an annual event that brings together members of the naturopathic community under one roof. From new graduates to esteemed alumni, to representatives of the naturopathic professional associations and happy friends and family, convocation represents the best of who we are, brought together in a moment of celebration.

Naturopathic medicine continues to become more and more ingrained among patients who seek help and support with the prevention of disease, the management of chronic conditions and adjunctive care to life threatening illness.



In that spirit, convocation reminds us to remember to celebrate all that has been accomplished in this profession and all those who have made naturopathic medicine so impactful.

To that end, we hope you enjoy our convocation photos and the stories of naturopathic success from across North America that we have brought together in this issue. *

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simone', with a long, sweeping underline.

Simone Philogène,
Chief Communications &
Marketing Officer, CCNM



L-R: New graduates Sonam Desai, Melissa Descoteaux, Shannon Dragasevich, Megan Druet, Priya Duggal, Kelsey Duncan, and Tara Dunne take in CCNM's convocation ceremony.

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Family at the heart of Cornerstone Naturopathic's success

For Nova Scotia's Dr. Ben Connolly, ND
(Class of 2011), success is a healthy
family – and a healthy profession



Cornerstone Naturopathic in Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia.
The state-of-the-art building opened in 2014.

HELPING THE NATUROPATHIC PROFESSION

“My ultimate goal is to help the naturopathic profession. It’s gratifying to watch students grow and become successful. When we help students, those students then become NDs and help others, and that becomes the norm across Canada.”

Dr. Ben Connolly, ND (Class of 2011)



Dr. Ben Connolly, ND, and wife Julie run Cornerstone Naturopathic in their hometown of Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia.

At Cornerstone Naturopathic, family comes first.

Dr. Ben Connolly, ND, and wife Julie were both in their second year of post-graduate studies in Toronto when they drew up the blueprints for their ideal health-care clinic. Ben and Julie, who were studying naturopathic medicine and massage therapy respectively, agreed that no matter what their practice looked like, their family would remain the focus.

That was seven years ago. Nowadays, they run Cornerstone Naturopathic in their hometown of Upper Tantallon, Nova Scotia, have two children (son Caleb and baby Elise), and big plans for the future.

Journey to medicine

Ben, who graduated from CCNM in 2011, says his interest in medicine truly began when he broke his hand in a skating accident at the age of 16.

“I needed plastic surgery to fix my broken hand,” he recalls. “I was awake during the procedure and I absolutely knew I wanted to practice medicine at that point.”

As an undergraduate student pursuing a degree in biology at St. Mary’s University in Halifax, Ben worked as a lab assistant at Queen Elizabeth II Health Sciences Centre. When he quickly became disheartened with the long hours and lack of resources, a family friend suggested he research naturopathic medicine instead.

“I discovered you can create your own practice that is evidence-based. I looked up schools and CCNM was it,” Ben says. “I would never change it. I’m glad I became a naturopathic doctor.”

Setting business goals

With an onsite nursery – supervised by caregiver Melissa – patients with children can see Ben for their naturopathic care while their kids are looked after. Julie handles most of the clinic management, including the accounting and bookkeeping.



Family at the heart of Cornerstone Naturopathic's success cont'd

Their workday begins at 10 a.m., and only one evening per week is spent at the clinic. Weekends are kept strictly as family time.

But the first three years of practice didn't run as smoothly or as scheduled. This flexibility and balance they now enjoy was born out of nonstop work on both evenings and weekends. Ben refers to it as the "investment stage" of business.

"When I graduated from CCNM, my business goal was to have 1,000 patients in three years – that's when your practice hits critical mass. I went door-to-door to professional buildings, gave talks – sometimes twice a week – at libraries, community centres, basically anyone who would give me the time of day. I took continuing education courses and learned new treatments and modalities," he says.

Eventually, Ben's practice boomed. And just before he hit three years of practice, he surpassed his goal of 1,000 patients.

Supporting students and graduates

Ben considers preceptorship and residency vital for the future of naturopathic medicine, believing that NDs need exposure to as many different opportunities as possible. Cornerstone Naturopathic offers both a residency for new graduates and six internship positions for CCNM students, and Ben often mentors NDs who have started their own clinics.

"My ultimate goal is to help the naturopathic profession. It's gratifying to watch students grow and become successful. When we help students, those students then become NDs and help others, and that becomes the norm across Canada. But we have to create these positions for students and NDs ourselves.



One of Cornerstone Naturopathic's treatment areas.

"I learned as much from my students as much as they learn from me," he continues. "It's a two-way street. I appreciate that which is why I love preceptors and interns coming through."

ND Print Press, launching this summer, is another way Ben is giving back. Calling to mind his time as a new graduate and the effort expended on creating handouts and brochures, Ben has unveiled an easier (and cheaper) marketing strategy that will save overhead costs.

"NDs can order general information on modalities, herbs, and so on. Any clinic can have these if you don't decide to make your own materials. When you print, you usually

have to order large amounts. You can order 10 brochures here if you want and you won't break the bank."

According to Ben, there's no need to reinvent the wheel when it comes to setting up a practice – keep expenses low in the beginning is key because it will save both time and money in the long run. Both are invaluable, especially when family is involved. *

Learn more about

Cornerstone Naturopathic at:

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"I discovered you can create your own practice that is evidence-based... I'm glad I became a naturopathic doctor."

Dr. Ben Connolly, ND (Class of 2011)

Fifteen Minutes with Sara Ip

Class of 2016 graduate shares her
journey from the corporate world
to naturopathic medicine



Q Describe your background in business.

A – Not many may know that I graduated with an honours Bachelor of Commerce from McMaster University with a focus in marketing and sales and with an excitement to conquer the world. I then moved to Ottawa to work for an elevator company in account management and later joined a market research firm in Toronto.

Q What made you decide to study naturopathic medicine and why did you choose CCNM?

A – The decision to study naturopathic medicine was not a straightforward one. It wasn't until my own health demanded attention and the conventional approach was not working that I was forced to look for other options. I made lifestyle changes and explored my corporate health benefits, making my way down the list of practitioners I had coverage for until reaching the letter "n." I did not know what a naturopathic doctor was, but decided there was nothing to lose by seeing one and took a leap of faith.

After having an incredibly healing experience, my curiosity propelled me to research the educational requirements to become an ND. It took a few months for me to come to terms with the opportunity cost of leaving industry and going back to school. But the universe sent many signals my way and I realized I wanted to take ownership of my health and feel empowered to help my loved ones and the world at large. The understanding that this commitment would be permanent and an actualization of my life's purpose made the transition from industry to academia a smoother one.

Q What role do you play in the CCNM Business Association (CCNMBA)?

A – I founded the CCNMBA in September 2013 after noticing a lot of my colleagues expressed fear and uncertainty about their future. There were a lot of concerns around debt repayment, marketing, finances, patient retention and an overall lack in confidence around practice management. The aim of the association is to further the business education at the College, promote awareness about the importance of business as it pertains to naturopathic medicine, and improve overall business competencies. We started with a handful of dedicated students and grew to be one of the largest Naturopathic Student Association clubs in our first year.

Q What is the importance of having a business association for CCNM and naturopathic medical students?

A – In order to be able to practice what you love, you have to be financially sustainable. There is a saying that it is best to have a map before going into the forest. If students can identify their various career options, they are more likely to pursue a medical career that is satisfying, comprehensive and sustainable. We bring in companies, technologies, business savvy NDs and health-care practitioners to connect with students to add value to their educational experience. If NDs are financially viable, they'll have resources in place to help others.

Q What are your goals for the CCNMBA and its future development?

A – The CCNMBA has evolved throughout the past three years at CCNM and will continue to grow under new leadership. We have been able to host a successful business summit at the College for the past two years, brought in NDs to share their insights, successes and failures, and explored the many prolific career routes that exist for NDs. As the association continues to grow, we hope to connect to the other naturopathic colleges and focus on the simple steps that students can take to jumpstart a prosperous practice.

Q What are your future plans after graduating from CCNM?

A – I would like to travel as much as possible both while working as an ND and in general. I am also excited to build a practice focused on adjunctive cancer care and women's health and would love to work abroad to develop access to naturopathic medicine globally. Who knows what the future will bring, but I look forward to it with enthusiasm, hope and gratitude. The world is full of endless possibilities for NDs! *

Learn more about Sara Ip:
www.drarsaraip.com

 /drsaraipND

“As the association continues to grow, we hope to connect to the other naturopathic colleges and focus on the simple steps that students can take to jumpstart a prosperous practice.”

Sara Ip, Founder, CCNM Business Association (CCNMBA)



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HIGHLIGHTS FROM CCNM'S 2016 CONVOCATION CEREMONY

At this year's convocation ceremony – held on May 26 at the University of Toronto's historic Convocation Hall – 137 graduates proudly received their Bachelor of Naturopathy degrees in front of a delighted crowd of family, friends, CCNM staff, and faculty. The College also recognized five residents for completing their residencies.





The many careers of Dr. Michael Smith, ND

Class of 1995 graduate Dr. Michael Smith, ND, is a poster child for how varied a career one can have as an ND; he has been a pharmacist, professor, author, administrator, senior public servant and board member.

Dr. Smith first trained in pharmacology before becoming an ND. At CCNM, he was a faculty member and eventually became associate dean of research.

His career then turned in another direction when he was seconded to Health Canada to serve on the Natural Health Products Directorate. Dr. Smith spent over a decade in the public service, first in Canada and then in Australia.

Dr. Smith would go on to be the only Canadian appointed to the World Health Organization's 12-member Expert Advisory Panel on Traditional and Complementary Medicine in 2009 and was one of the primary technical drafters of the WHO Global Strategy for Traditional and Complementary Medicine (2014 – 2023).

L-R: Chair of CCNM's Board of Governors Dr. Colleen McQuarrie, ND, honorary degree recipient Dr. Michael Smith, ND, and CCNM president and CEO Bob Bernhardt.

Prepare for the unexpected, be passionate, and treat others kindly

The recipient of the 2016 honorary degree, Dr. Michael Smith, ND, delivered the convocation address. Here are excerpts from his speech.

One of the best pieces of advice I ever heard from a colleague was if you want to be heard, deliver information in five bullet points or less.

Point #1

“You have brains in your head; you have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.” – Dr. Seuss

Relish what the future holds.

Now I know that many of you are wondering where this is going.

No. 1

“You have brains in your head; you have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself in any direction you choose.”

Dr. Seuss

And I hear you – I almost used another quote, a variation on the Yiddish proverb.

“People plan and God laughs.”

So, don't get me wrong, I am not saying everything is simple and good things will spontaneously happen: planning is good, planning is our friend. The truth is that I like thinking in the box, I don't like unknowns, and I like process. What I have discovered though is that you don't have to be reckless – you just have to be open to opportunities.

When I graduated in 1995, I thought that the mainstay of my professional life would

be built around clinical practise with maybe some of my time spent teaching and maybe writing. Looking back over the last 20 years, the trajectory of my career, and sometimes it was like being fired out of a canon, has been eclectic – pharmacist, naturopathic doctor, educator, regulator, academic and consultant.

But I am not alone in building a career primarily outside clinical practice with many naturopathic doctors choosing to work in other parts of the health care sector. These include industry, academia, research, policy and regulatory affairs, government and communications, many at very senior levels. Also, it is not always an either or question; many follow these paths as well as maintaining a clinical presence.

Now I don't want to sound trite; I know how anxious I was about the future when I was a new graduate and suspect many of you feel the same way. There will be a many challenges and obstacles you will need to face and I better than most appreciate the role of luck and timing in opening up opportunities. But I would ask you to remember that you have many avenues to explore.

Point #2

“An original idea. That can't be too hard. The library must be full of them.” – Stephen Fry

Don't be afraid to ask questions.

You have just completed a rigorous educational and training program in a breadth of interventions that exists in no other health-care discipline. You have learned not only about the more science

based approaches such as clinical nutrition and modern phytotherapy but also more traditional modalities such as the rich tapestry of Traditional Chinese Medicine and the eloquence of clinical herbalism to name only a few. But given all this and the

No. 2

“An original idea. That can't be too hard. The library must be full of them.”

Stephen Fry

wonderful perspective it brings, you will now realize that it is not that you learned too much but rather that your education is just starting.

My advice here is learn from others, those who have been doing this for a while. Your colleagues are an irreplaceable source of knowledge and experience – from clinical questions to practice questions to communication questions to well, just questions. Ask them. Anything new to you is often just par for the course for them.

This leads me to #3.

“Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.” – Andy Rooney

While it can be difficult, it is always more rewarding to work with others.

The best way of learning is as a part of a community, with folk from both inside your new profession and from outside; in fact the more diverse the better. You may be

No. 3

“Always keep your words soft and sweet, just in case you have to eat them.”

Andy Rooney

wondering why I used the quote from the late Andy Rooney, well sometimes, maybe often, you will not be welcomed into the team but please do not stop trying. Foster that dialogue and have that conversation. You don't need to sacrifice your beliefs and you will be surprised how things change.

Working with others helps you gain perspective and this is often as important than learning the cold hard facts. As you have heard, I have been fortunate to work on many traditional medicine projects internationally, with people facing challenges and obstacles that I could not truly appreciate. Having the opportunity and privilege to glimpse the world through their eyes has helped me better appreciate and grow from the fact that there are many different contexts and approaches.

Point #4

“When dogma enters the brain, all intellectual activity ceases.” – Robert Anton Wilson

Defend against dogma; it doesn't matter from where it comes.

Irrespective of the discipline or profession, people involved in health care are people who passionately believe in what they are doing and truly want to promote good health. This is why I, and I am sure you, entered naturopathic medicine. Sadly

the line between truth and reality are often blurred and you are entering a still polarized area. You will face both criticisms from across the health care, science and increasingly philosophical spectrum. You will have a lot of noise for you to filter out.

From my vantage point, I can tell you, I am a strong supporter of the principles of evidence-based medicine. I am also an ardent supporter of traditional forms of health and healing. I don't see this as a contradiction. Health-care, irrespective of the discipline, is as much an art as a science. If you read the definition of evidence-based medicine, you will not find the term 'randomized controlled trial,' and just to be clear I am a fan of quality RCTs, but what you will find though is that one of its defining principles is the respect for an individuals values and expectations.

No. 4

“When dogma enters the brain, all intellectual activity ceases.”

Robert Anton Wilson

Finally and maybe most importantly – #5.
“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” – Aesop

Never underestimate the power of respect, humility and kindness.

It is sad that increasingly that these attributes are often confused with weakness and in fact nothing can be further from the truth. More often than not, it takes more courage to go against the grain than to go with the flow.

I can't remember who said this, and I am paraphrasing, but people are more than just convenient water resistant containers that can be used to easily transport diseases to

No. 5

“No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.”

Aesop

a clinic. They bring much more than that and often are living a reality that you are not aware of. Respect, the ability to listen and supporting people on their journey is often the most important thing you can do.

If I were asked what one thing I have achieved so far in my career, I hope that in some small way I have supported the question of informed choice. Away from pills and potions, diets and devices, irrespective of which path you choose, people will come to you and value you for your knowledge and guidance. Often your most important role will be in helping people navigate their options and to come to a decision. They will not necessarily agree with what you say, and this is fine, but with your help they can make the right choice for them – an informed choice.

If you do this, you will embody the quote from the late Maya Angelou

“I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

Thank you for this wonderful honour.

Good luck et bonne chance! *

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CCNM'S 2016 CONVOCATION CEREMONY



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CCNM'S 2016 CONVOCATION CEREMONY





Mind Over Matter

Dr. Adam Breiner, ND (Class of 2002),
focuses on brain health at The NeuroEdge
Brain Performance Centre in Connecticut



A BASE OF KNOWLEDGE

“My father ... always said that you get a base of knowledge in school; it’s your certificate to learn, but that the learning really begins once you’re out.”

Dr. Adam Breiner, ND (Class of 2002)



A team of five health-care practitioners, including Dr. Adam Breiner, ND, provide naturopathic and holistic care for patients.

Increasing awareness about head injuries

In December 2015, the movie *Concussion* starring Will Smith was released in theatres. The film generated a lot of buzz and turned the spotlight on to the world of head injuries and in particular, how they are treated. Unfortunately there’s no clear cut answer; as concussions and traumatic brain injuries (TBI) continue to be studied, we learn about their long-term effects and subsequently what treatment options exist.

Making the brain better

Naturopathic medicine is often described as a system of primary health care that can be used to help prevent and treat a variety of common health issues including weight management, digestive complaints, pain, diabetes, and heart disease. It’s not very often that you hear about the benefits it can have on head injuries and neurological conditions; however, one CCNM graduate is paving the way in this area.

Dr. Adam Breiner, ND is medical director of The NeuroEdge Brain Performance Centre, a division of The Breiner Whole-Body Health Centre in Fairfield, Connecticut.

“It wasn’t an area I thought I’d be specializing in even though I was interested in the brain and how we can make it better,” says Breiner of his practice.

Treating neurological conditions with the latest technology

Adam completed a biology degree at Binghamton University in New York before enrolling at CCNM. Shortly after graduating from the College in 2002, he came across electroencephalogram (EEG) technology and neurofeedback. An EEG is a test where electrodes are placed on the patient’s scalp and the resulting signals are amplified so one can detect how the brain is communicating and reveal possible abnormal patterns. Biofeedback, in general, are techniques that train people to improve their health by controlling certain bodily processes that normally happen involuntarily (heart rate, blood pressure, etc.). Neurofeedback is a type of biofeedback that teaches self-regulation of brain function.

"I thought it was very interesting, something I had never heard of before, it wasn't taught in school and wasn't well known at the time," he says. "My father – who practices dentistry in a holistic way – always said that you get a base of knowledge in school; it's your certificate to learn, but that the learning really begins once you're out."

With that frame of mind he reached out to Dr. Margaret Ayers, one of the founders in the field of neurofeedback and spent many years mentoring with her.

"To me, it is a very naturopathic approach using an advanced technology because you're giving the body the tools it needs to heal."

Soon after he began learning about neurofeedback, Breiner came across the idea of hyperbaric oxygen therapy (HBOT), a medical treatment in which patients inhale 100% oxygen in a total body chamber enhancing the body's natural healing processes. He got in contact with Dr. Richard Neubauer – the father of hyperbaric medicine for neurological conditions who pioneered its use in the treatment of neurological conditions such as multiple sclerosis, stroke, and cerebral palsy – and trained with him over many years.

"Oxygen is the most healing molecule there is. One hyperbaric session is really like genetic therapy: over 8,000 genes are affected, it's anti-inflammatory, stimulates stem cells to grow, helps blood vessels form, it has a lot of properties," he explains.

Breiner's work at the NeuroEdge Brain Performance Centre combines neurofeedback and HBOT, and in combination with his training as a naturopath, he's been able to help treat a variety of neurological conditions effectively.

The future of caring for the brain?

"One of naturopathic medicine's guiding principles is to emphasize prevention. When it comes to concussions or TBI, it's more than just 'wear a helmet.' What can you be doing to lower inflammation and make the brain more resilient? Detoxification is a great way to rid the body of the pesticides and heavy metals that can affect the brain in a tremendous way."

His work in this field has garnered a lot of attention: he's spoken at many international conferences, given media interviews and was invited to be at the US Congressional Task Force in Washington about concussions and TBI. However, not all the attention has been positive.

"Quite a few neurologists have been pretty dismissive of these treatments and there's a debate like there always is in medicine, but as naturopaths we're used to fighting against the tide. There is research to back these treatments and other health-care professionals are becoming more open and receptive and have referred patients as a result.

"As naturopaths, we're trained to be like quarterbacks who can see the whole picture. Modalities such as nutrition, traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, and botanicals can have tremendous affects which help the body and brain be more receptive to neurofeedback and HBOT. These are all tools in our toolbox and it's pretty amazing to see people respond so well to treatment." *

"There is research to back these treatments and other health-care professionals are becoming more open and receptive and have referred patients as a result."

Dr. Adam Breiner, ND (Class of 2002)



Dr. Adam Breiner, ND, with a patient

Business excellence in the heart of the **Kawarthas**

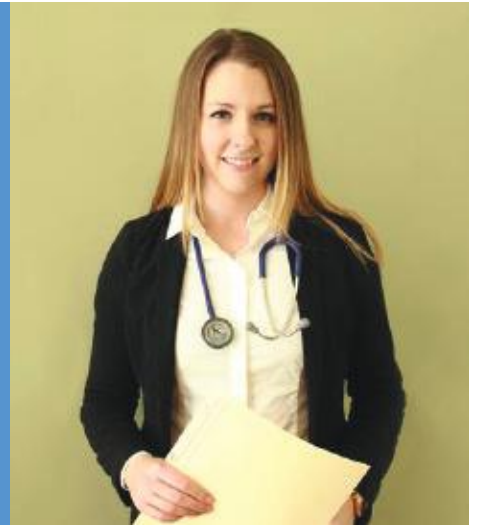
How award winner Dr. Brenda Tapp, ND
(Class of 2012), built a thriving practice
and garnered recognition from the community
in four short years



I KNEW I HAD TO BE DIFFERENT

“When I was attending CCNM two of my aunts (one on each side of my family) were diagnosed with breast cancer. I spent a lot of time taking extra courses to learn about how naturopathic medicine can complement conventional chemotherapy and radiation treatments. As a result, my practice evolved into one that focuses on adjunctive cancer.”

Dr. Brenda Tapp, ND, (Class of 2012)



Brenda's clinic, the Peterborough Centre of Naturopathic Medicine, stands out because she provides adjunctive cancer treatments, family health care, cosmetic acupuncture and women's health services.

An introduction to naturopathic medicine

Dr. Brenda Tapp, ND, always dreamed of being a physician – sometimes she shifted between becoming a pediatrician, surgeon or an OB/GYN, but the Class of 2012 graduate always knew medicine was her calling.

“During my undergraduate degree at Trent University, I had a roommate who loved her ND and wanted to become one. I started doing more research projects on nutrients and herbs and their impact on health and was intrigued by my readings,” she remembers.

“After graduation, I applied to CCNM, was accepted, and haven't looked back.”

Practising in Peterborough

Located on the Otonabee River, Peterborough is roughly a 1.5 hour drive northeast of Toronto on highway 115. Brenda grew up here and wanted to bring naturopathic medicine to her community.

Her clinic, the Peterborough Centre of Naturopathic Medicine, stands out because she provides adjunctive cancer treatments, family health care, cosmetic acupuncture and women's health services.

“I knew I had to be different,” she says.

“When I was attending CCNM two of my aunts (one on each side of my family) were diagnosed with breast cancer. I spent a lot of time taking extra courses to learn about how naturopathic medicine can complement conventional chemotherapy and radiation treatments. As a result, my practice evolved into one that focuses on adjunctive cancer.”

Her clinic's rapid growth and success has not gone unnoticed. In 2014 and 2015, Brenda was awarded the Business Excellence Award in Health and Wellness. The award, established by the Greater Peterborough Chamber Of Commerce and the Small Business Week Committee, seeks to honour responsible businesses that promote education and wellness.

She also received a “4-under-40” award which recognizes those under the age of 40 who are making their mark in the Peterborough area.

Brenda says it was an honour to have her efforts recognized and appreciated: “That motivates me to continue educating my community about our profession because I feel like I am making a difference.”



Building a successful clinic

Seeing patients is only one aspect of Brenda's daily work – when she breaks down the numbers, patient interactions account for sometimes less than 50 per cent of her time.

"I work 12-15 hours per day, four days a week, but I only see patients 30 hours a week. The rest is spent out in the community or doing patient research," she states.

The bulk of her community work is made up of volunteering and outreach, which Brenda credits as the main reason why her practice developed so quickly. She has sat on four committees, attends numerous networking events, does talks at local businesses, and even served as a trainer for The Wolverines (the varsity football team) and The Lakers (the MSL lacrosse team).

More recently, her spirited efforts have also resulted in a milestone – recently, Brenda moved into a larger clinic space, nearly triple the size of her previous one. The new facility, located at 386 Burnham Street in Peterborough, is 2,400 square feet, wheelchair accessible, has five treatment rooms and one IV suite large enough for eight chairs. The clinic held its opening celebration on May 25.

The question of balance

A self-described "Type A personality," Brenda loves being her own boss and having control over her clinic's operations; on the other hand, it can result in working long, exhausting hours and the possibility of losing money when taking an extended break.

"There is a lot more risk in owning your own clinic, but with great risk comes great reward," she says.

"I find the most challenging part of being an entrepreneur is balancing my personal and professional life," she continues. "While I do find my time at work incredibly satisfying, I have to constantly remind myself to recharge. Having personal goals is just as important as business goals. For me, the two blend together so I have to spend quality time out of the office."

Luckily, Brenda loves being an ND and sees her career as the beginning. "Our medicine is so incredibly powerful and I am grateful that my training allows me to improve not just symptoms of my patients, but their overall quality of life." *

Learn more about Brenda's practice at: pcnm.ca

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Brenda was awarded the Business Excellence Award in Health and Wellness. The award, established by the Greater Peterborough Chamber Of Commerce and the Small Business Week Committee, seeks to honour responsible businesses that promote education and wellness.



BRENDA'S TOP SIX TIPS FOR PRACTICE MANAGEMENT

- 1 Starting a clinic is not a sprint, it's a marathon.**
Pace yourself and don't get discouraged.
- 2 Lean in to your career.**
Find your passion and give it all you've got. We sometimes tend to shy away from large career decisions because we feel we aren't ready. I strongly urge you to shift your thinking, focus on what you want out of your career and learn how to do it along the way.
- 3 Build yourself a team of mentors.**
Your team must include a good bookkeeper, lawyer, a naturopathic colleague, and a few business owners. View yourself as an entrepreneur because that's what you are. Find one in your community who can teach you business – marketing, branding and networking. They don't have to be in health care. I have several mentors and none of them are in the field.
- 4 Always visualize success.**
We all know the incredible power of visualization. The more often you tell yourself to do the something, the more you will believe it is possible. Always visualize your goal.
- 5 Search out the free resources your community offers to entrepreneurs and startup companies.**
They will help you learn how to network, review your business plan, teach you about grants, and guide you through the pros and cons of commercial leases or purchasing commercial property.
- 6 Prioritize taking care of yourself.**
You already know why a clean diet, exercise and meditation is important for health. We have to practise what we preach to be successful. *



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Working together to provide team-based health care

Dr. Natasha Montroy, ND
(Class of 2004), on the roots
of collaborative care
on Canada's west coast





“Integrative health care is our primary goal and it was a group decision to incorporate counseling, registered massage therapy and acupuncture.”

Dr. Natasha Montroy, ND (Class of 2004)

Canada’s west coast

The images and sounds of majestic, snow-capped mountains and the mighty crash of ocean waves on the rugged shore are captivating and inspiring for countless people who plant their roots out west. Farms, parks, and all sorts of year-round sporting activities makes it simple to live a healthier lifestyle.

For Dr. Natasha Montroy, ND, practising naturopathic medicine comes easily in this environment. She and her team of 10 health-care professionals work together to look after their patient’s health needs. Her practice, Vancouver Island Naturopathic Clinic in Victoria, BC, is an example of a successful, multidisciplinary clinic in which health care is truly collaborative.

“I measure success by a happy and healthy work environment,” she says. “In some naturopathic community, there may be a sense of competition between practitioners. I don’t feel as though that exists in Victoria.”

The gift of health care

After graduating from CCM in 2004, she returned to Victoria and began seeing patients while taking care of her young children. When she hired the ND who covered her maternity leave to a permanent position, Natasha promptly searched for a bigger space to accommodate her team’s burgeoning practice.

“Within a couple of years, we relocated to a clinic we designed in a local shopping centre and added more practitioners,” she explains. “Integrative health care is our primary goal and it was a group decision to incorporate counseling, registered massage therapy and acupuncture.”

Natasha’s own path to naturopathic medicine was stirred by her mother and grandmother, who ingrained the concepts of preventative health and food as medicine from an early age.

In Thunder Bay – where Natasha grew up before moving to Victoria at the age of 13 – the three would drive to a farm every Sunday on the city’s outskirts and purchase meat, dairy, and vegetables for the week. Then they would complete their trip at the local spring where they obtained fresh water.

Not surprisingly, her individual practice centres on women’s, pediatric and reproductive health, viewing them as one. “Ground zero” of a healthy society starts with a healthy mother, Natasha believes.

“As a child I didn’t understand fully the gift I was given. My family was ahead of our time,” she says.

Media know-how

Viewers of Breakfast Television in Victoria have seen Natasha on the program many times, discussing a variety of health topics and the benefits of naturopathic care. She has also been featured in Best Health magazine, CBC radio, Shaw Daily, Saanich News, and is a regular guest on CFAX, a local radio station. Additionally, she is a guest lecturer for the UBC Island Medical Program, presenting on naturopathic medicine and integrated health care.

Natasha fully embraces her role of community educator, eagerly spreading the message about naturopathic medicine. She first became familiar with speaking to the media at 18 when she worked for a local parks department as a lifeguard.



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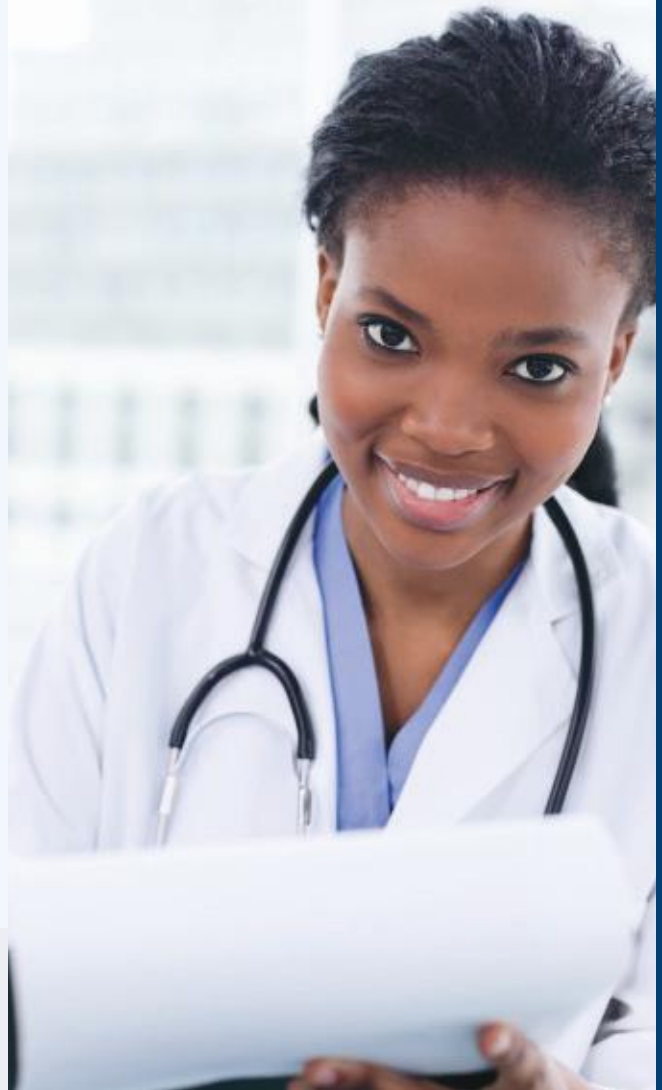
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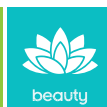
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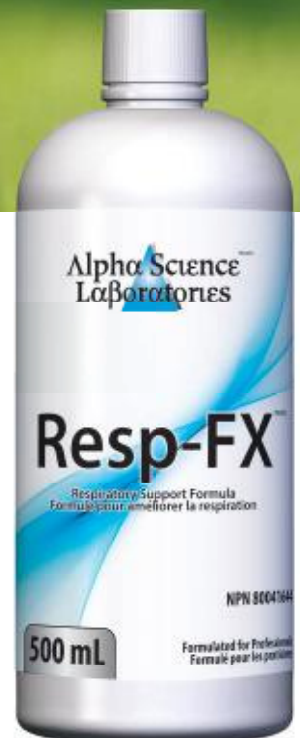


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L-R: Dr. Shalini Hitkari, ND, Dr. Natasha Montroy, ND, and Dr. Jasmine Wong, ND. All three are practitioners at Vancouver Island Naturopathic Clinic.

“Part of our job involved public education so I often gave TV and radio interviews on water and sun safety. I quickly realized I was able to reach a large amount of people this way,” she recalls.

Now, thanks to her regular appearances on TV and radio, she receives new patients and ensures that the practitioners in her clinic stay continuously busy.

“Media really allows for people to get the opportunity to meet you in the safety of their own home,” she says. “TV and radio are very effective methods of reaching a broad audience who may not be exposed to naturopathic medicine otherwise.”

The importance of learning from others

Natasha’s commitment to creating a collaborative environment extends beyond her colleagues. She provides highly sought-after externship opportunities for CCNM students, confident that the best learning stems from hands-on experiences with patients and mentorship from teachers.

“I remember being a student and the things I was exposed to,” she says. “We have so many seasoned practitioners with varied practice focuses. Even now I complete externships two-four times a year with MDs. There is still so much to learn.”

Her advice – for both new grads and NDs who have been practicing for a longer time – is to gain experience and wisdom by pursuing residencies or locum opportunities, or joining a team of seasoned practitioners for a few years. Don’t pass up the chance to learn from others – collaboration is essential to success. *

Learn more about Vancouver Island Naturopathic Clinic at: islandnaturopathic.com

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