

HEALTH

Alternative medicine minds meet next week

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About 250 providers of complementary and alternative medicine will meet in Vancouver Sept. 23 to share knowledge and lessons learned in the field.

The Dr. Rogers Prize Colloquium, as the event is called, is named after Dr. Roger Hayward Rogers, a Canadian visionary and trailblazer in complementary and alternative medicine (CAM).

During the national conference, a cash prize of \$250,000 will be awarded to a practitioner who has made important contributions to the CAM field. The Lotte and John Hecht Memorial Foundation established the biennial prize — the largest of its kind in North America — in 2007.

In 2009, it was shared by Dr. Hal Gunn, a medical doctor and former student of Rogers who was co-founder of the Centre for Integrated Health (now known as InspireHealth) in Vancouver and Dr. Badri Rickhi of Calgary.

The inaugural prize in 2007 was shared between Dr. Abram Hoffer of Victoria and Dr. Alastair Cunningham of Toronto.

Nominations for the prize come from health care providers across the CAM field.

Judges award the prize to those who best embody vision, leadership and integrity.

The winners must also demonstrate that they can collaborate with other health professionals and act as a catalyst for advancing the CAM field.

Andrea Burton, a spokeswoman for the event, said all nominees attend the conference and gala.

It is presumed that the winners of the prize will use it to further

their research or work at clinics like Gunn's InspireHealth, where cancer patients seek integrated care to boost immune systems and help complement their conventional cancer treatments.

According to surveys, the majority of Canadians have used some form of CAM, including naturopathic treatment, chiropractic care, massage therapy, acupuncture, yoga or herbal remedies.

Canadians spend nearly \$10 billion a year on providers and products associated with CAM.

Wayne Jonas, the first director of the Office of Alternative Medicine at the National Institutes of Health in the U.S., is the keynote speaker at a gala dinner at the conference venue, the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel on Sept. 23.

The conference will also feature speakers and discussions on how integrated medicine is practised in Canadian clinics, success stories and some of the problems or barriers for clinics.

Besides presentations from practitioners at InspireHealth, delegates will hear from health providers at a number of other clinics, including Integrative Healing Arts, a Vancouver holistic alternative clinic providing naturopathic services, traditional Chinese medicine, nutrition advice and several other services.

There will also be presentations from the Integrative Health Institute, a Toronto clinic that offers psychotherapy, pharmacy services, and maternity doulas in addition to the usual range of CAM; and the Seekers Centre for Integrative Medicine in Ottawa, which was established by Dr. Richard Nahas.

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