

HEALTH CARE REFORM AND CAM

(Plano, TX) - The perennial advice to take charge of your health has a timely new twist. Simply going for a second doctor's opinion isn't enough today when there are hundreds of complementary and alternative therapies available. President Obama has even expressed his openness to including complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) into our health care system at a town hall meeting in Arnold, Missouri.

"My attitude is that we should do what works," President Obama said. "So I think it is pretty well documented through scientific studies that acupuncture, for example, can be very helpful in relieving certain things like migraines and other ailments -- or at least as effective as more intrusive interventions." The President added that "Unfortunately, the hardest thing to do in politics -- and certainly in health care reform -- has been to get policymakers to make investments early that will have long-term payoffs." He elaborated that elected officials and those in the private insurance system make the same, short-term calculations on health care and that the current thinking in our health care system is going to have to change to a priority on prevention.

Congressional health care reform efforts have already started looking at expanding accepted options beginning with Senate hearings last February chaired by Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA). The field of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM), more recently called Integrative Medicine, ranges from ancient healing techniques to the latest technologies and innovations.

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Doctors have become even more aggressive in urging patients to assume responsibility for their own health because lifestyle is a critical factor in good health. According to researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, a 2005 study shows that tobacco smoking and high blood pressure are responsible for up to 20% of the deaths in America each year. Being overweight or having limited physical activity may account for an additional 10% of deaths.

Dallas author Alan Smith notes, "To obtain a medical license in America it is not necessary to have even a single hour of study in CAM. Just because a doctor says there isn't anything else they can do for you does not mean that nothing more can be done!" In the new, expanded hardcover edition of his book, *UnBreak Your Health* (June 2009) Mr. Smith suggests that relying only on your doctors is like trying to play without a full deck of cards because there are too many options missing. "Each one of us must take responsibility for our own health and look at every opportunity available today for better health including complementary and alternative therapies that have been shown to be safe and effective for decades, hundreds, even thousands of years" he added.

UnBreak Your Health was published in 2007, quickly becoming an award-winning book featuring in local, regional and national publications. Mr. Smith has been a guest on more than 45 radio shows in major markets across the country such as Dallas, Denver, Seattle and San Francisco and he currently hosts an Internet program on complementary and alternative therapies located at <http://www.unbreakyourhealth.com/podcasts.htm>.

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