

Naturopath Taps Medical Wisdom Of The Ages

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By John Voket

Dr Shawn Carney may appear to be younger than his years, but the fresh-faced naturopath is well-versed in combining age-old medical wisdom with state-of-the-art diagnostics to deliver his patients a well-rounded 21st Century program of care.

Along with his wife Stacy, a massage therapist, he recently established his first solo practice, Northeast Natural Medicine, which is tucked beneath the shadow of the flagpole at the back of 33 Main Street.

On the day of his visit with The Newtown Bee, Dr Carney was celebrating his first month of operation in his cozy digs, which features a comfortable waiting room and well outfitted exam and consultation suite.

Just a few minutes from his Sandy Hook home, Dr Carney relaxed in his waiting room and recalled growing up in nearby Putnam County, N.Y., where he first set his sights on practicing acupuncture. But when he considered the positive impact he could make in a patient's life by adding the expertise of a naturopathic physician, he decided to take that career path instead.

Four years of med school and an internship later, he settled in Sandy Hook and completed his search for a high-profile location where he and his wife could hang out a shingle and begin working, improving the health of their neighbors and their new community.

"I decided to go into this line of work when I discovered what a difference I could make being able to order top-level diagnostics, while applying naturopathic treatments like nutraceuticals, botanical medicine, and homeopathy," Dr Carney said. "I'm trained the same way as any physician, but my philosophy involves restoring wellness by bringing your body back into balance with nature."

Finding His Niche

Dr Carney sees his niche locally as being a specialist in the treatment and prevention of Lyme disease and diabetes, along with treating a significant range of other general health conditions from influenza to arthritis.

One of his first patients was a very young child with a chronic ear infection who had been on "months of antibiotics, with no measurable improvement," Dr Carney recalled. After a brief examination, the naturopath applied manual traction to the child's Eustachian tube to drain the fluid that was causing discomfort and pressure in his ear, "and gravity did the rest," he said.

Then, his next step was to advise the child's mother, who was still breastfeeding at the time, to avoid most or all possible allergic foods she might be consuming and passing on to the child through her own metabolism.

"I thought his immune system could be affected or aggravated by certain foods she was allergic to, even though she wasn't necessarily showing any allergic symptoms," Dr Carney said. "And whether she knew it or not, if there were allergens at play here, she was unknowingly passing them on to the baby."

For the local naturopath, the realm of treatment for these patients was as much common sense as it was a process of medical detective work and application.

"I combined investigation with symptomatic relief, and then added fighting the infection directly with botanical medicines including echinacea and golden seal, which worked as antimicrobials to attack the infection instead of a pharmaceutical antibiotic."

As an ongoing therapy, he added a dose of high probiotics that was sprinkled into a bowl of tasty coconut yogurt, which also provided a boost of infection-fighting vitamin D. And according to Dr Carney, it was only a few days before mom and baby saw the worst of their infection experience behind them.

"We just worked on optimizing the mother's and baby's immune systems so the baby could send the most nutritious, infection fighting power to where he needed it most," he added. "It takes doing that level of detective work with almost every patient to remove the barriers to wellness."

Lyme Intervention

In regard to his work with Lyme disease sufferers, Dr Carney pointed to a recent study that was reviewed at a New Hampshire naturopathic conference he attended which revealed a variety of "botanical protocols that knock out the spirochete bacteria that causes Lyme."

He has already applied that protocol in a couple of his patients, which he said helped them maintain a higher level of wellness, and sustained them after they underwent a regiment of intense antibiotic treatments.

"Sometimes we work hand-in-hand with their doctors because with Lyme disease you may often require the level of intervention only antibiotics deliver," he said, adding, "It's important to avail the patient to the best of both worlds."

Having seen the slow and eventually fatal course of diabetes in his own father, Dr Carney is well armed to help Newtowners prevent the disease, and to best treat it if they are diagnosed. He is thrilled to have learned about several cellular treatments that have been found to help insulin efficiency.

"In my previous practice in Avon, I saw patients decrease their insulin regiment with these types of natural interventions in conjunction with adjustments to their lifestyle.

With that in mind, he fashioned a credo for his practice that says, "where modern and traditional medicine meet."

"We want to offer the best contemporary medicine and medical technology can bring to the patient," he said. These contemporary and conventional interventions will be applied along with some of the centuries-old practices Dr Carney has learned and applies almost daily in his practice.

As far as his new location, just a stone's throw from home, Dr Carney said, "I couldn't be happier."

And he is one of the few naturopaths in the region who accepts most insurance.

"I'm finding that more and more health insurance carriers are seeing the benefits naturopathic treatments can provide to their policyholders, plus an overall reduction in the cost of claims."

Throughout his grand opening, and until the end of July, Dr Carney is offering free 15-minute consultations for all new patients. Anyone interested in meeting Newtown's newest naturopath can call the practice at 800-723-2962 or visit Dr Carney's website at northeastnatmed.com.