



Acupuncture treatment

photo by Chris Fritchie

Au Natural Healthcare Therapies

By Jennifer Nelson

WITH RISING HEALTHCARE costs and the increase of “super bugs” on the minds of virtually every American, more and more people seem to be searching for healthcare alternatives. Many of these searches lead to natural care, including chiropractic, acupuncture, massage, rehabilitation and holistic medicine (herbal treatments and practices that include mind, body and soul). While a decade ago most people were skeptical about such treatments, the use of these natural practices — also called “complementary” and “alternative medicine” — is much more common today.

In a 2002 study by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NCCAM) and the National Center for Health Statistics, 36 percent of adults surveyed said they used some form of complementary and alternative medicine in the last

12 months and 54.9 percent said they believed complementary and alternative medicine combined with conventional medicine would help in their situation. The study found that this natural care was used most often to treat back pain, head colds, neck pain, joint pain, anxiety and depression.

The media is also picking up on the increased use of natural care. On March 25th, *Good Morning America* discussed a new study that implies a link between receiving a neck adjustment by a chiropractor and lower blood pressure. Last fall, a number of morning shows featured a story on acupuncture and its effect on back pain and another story about its effect on pregnancy.

WHY THE NEW INTEREST?

Many reasons explain why people are turning more to natural care, including rising healthcare costs and

more accessible research through the Internet. Jana Dillon Ward, ATC, LAT, LMT, is part of the ACM Health Solutions practice in Plano and has almost 15 years of massage therapy experience and nearly 20 years in athletic training. She attributes the increase in the use of natural care to our consumer-driven society.

“Patients are starting to look for more answers than medicine and surgery,” says Ms. Ward. “Not to say that those things aren’t helpful — there are times when medicine and surgery are very necessary and very helpful. But people are looking for things outside of traditional medicine because that field seems to treat symptoms while people are often looking to treat the causes.”

WHAT DOES NATURAL CARE OFFER?

Dr. Brian Dillon, DC, of ACM Health