

NEW PARADIGM

HWA hosts worksite wellness educational symposium
By Henderson J. Smith, Jr.

The Houston Wellness Association (HWA) has a vision to transform Houston into a widely modeled, innovative city for healthy living.

While many of the solutions for healthier living and well-being cut across our society's socio-economic strata, some sectors of the wellness community have experienced greater difficulty in being integrated into the mainstream of western culture as viable options for the enhancement of human well-being.

Though numerous reasons exist for this disparity, the Complementary & Integrative Wellness Committee of the HWA exists for the simple reason that most people will not and cannot effectively choose the benefits of a wellness practice that they do not understand or do not know exists. We are here to help dissolve the myths and offer solutions.

As chair of the C&I Wellness Committee, I firmly believe that the time has come to embrace a system of proactive wellness care that considers the whole human being, before, during and after symptoms drive the need for traditional medical intervention.

The business community of Houston employs a diverse microcosm of the population and, given the escalation in the cost of providing benefits, the time may have arrived for eastern and western healthcare practices, allopathic and holistic approaches to share a common agenda of wellness for optimal functionality.

To that end, this committee is collaborating with the HWA's Worksite Wellness Business Forum (WBF) to provide an educational symposium on September 26 from 7 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Sponsored and hosted by the Houstonian Hotel, the symposium will deliver information on cost effective health enhancement options as a compliment to existing worksite wellness initiatives and medical treatment plans.

The symposium will explore topics like nutrition, managing stress, physical activity, hydration and detoxification. It will examine mind body practices like yoga, qigong and tai chi



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and evaluate healing hands practices such as therapeutic massage, reflexology, acupressure, chiropractic and acupuncture. The value of aroma therapies, essential oils, herbs and nutritional supplements, in the context of their application to help condition a healthier work force, increase productivity and reduce expensive medical claims, will also be discussed.

Entitled "Integrating Traditional & Complementary Practices to Yield Optimal Results for Employee Wellness," the symposium will feature a panel of speakers, including representatives of the Houstonian, addressing the subject of corporate wellness and holistic practices. Mayor's Wellness Council Chair William B. Baun, EPD, FAWHP will speak on traditional elements of a worksite wellness program, while Dr. Raymond Solis will discuss how healthy employees cost less money and the role of C&I practices.

I will speak on the elements and uses of C&I wellness modalities in the workplace, emphasizing what is appropriate and what is not. Maureen Godfrey, chair of the WBF, will moderate.

Realizing that no one system of healthcare has all the answers, the HWA believes that the next evolution of wellness in this country will emerge from a collaboration between the business and medical communities, and a joining of traditional healthcare practices and complementary practices to create the best possible solution.

For more information on this event and the Houston Wellness Association, visit HoustonWellness.org.



Henderson J. Smith, Jr. is a founding board member and vice chairman of the board of the Houston Wellness Association, and chairman of the Complementary & Integrative Wellness Committee. He is president of Benefits Design & Worksite Wellness.