

Integrative Health Care at Mission Hospital in Asheville, NC

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The Integrative Program at Mission Hospital originally began in the summer of 2008 with a staff of three. Currently, the department has 18 staff members including an Integrative Medicine physician, Holistic Nurse Specialists, Movement Instructors who specialize in Tai Chi, Qigong and Yoga, Administrative staff, Pet Therapy Coordinators, Education Coordinator, and a Music Therapist. The program will soon be adding an Acupuncturist and Art Therapist to the department because of extended Integrative Health services that will be offered at the new Cancer Center.

Integrative Healthcare is a combination of traditional medicine and complementary modalities that address the whole person, not just the disease. At Mission Hospital the Integrative Healthcare Department is helping patients achieve balance through science and compassion and by maximizing the body's potential for healing. This optimal healing is achieved by creating a partnership in which patient and practitioner work together, incorporating treatment options from conventional and complementary approaches, taking into account not only physical symptoms, but also psychological, social, and spiritual aspects of health and illness.

Integrative Healthcare at Mission Hospital is dedicated to the safe and compassionate integration of complementary and conventional medicine through the activities of research, education, clinical services, and community partnerships.

Integrative Healthcare seeks to:

- Reaffirm the importance of relationships in enhancing wellness and healing in a family-centered and culturally-sensitive manner.
- Promote safe, evidence-based practice that integrates effective therapies.
- Collaborate with community resources and practitioners to create an integrated healing network.

The foundation of the Integrative Health Program began by giving the tools of Holistic care back to nurses. At Mission Hospital this means implementing Integrative Holistic nursing practices and creating an innovative program which builds on the success of Mission's healing journey. Nurses are given the opportunity to become Holistic Resource nurses through a 24-hour continuing education course. This course focuses on evidence based nursing practices and the core values of Holistic Nursing from the *American Holistic Nurses Association* and the *American Nurses Association*.

The class guides nurses in the art and science of holistic nursing and offers ways of thinking, practicing, and responding both personally and professionally to bring healing to the forefront of healthcare. Emphasis is placed not only on preparing for the Holistic Nursing Certification (HNC) exam, but also in preparing Mission nurses to serve as Holistic Resource nurses in their roles as clinicians, educators, and researchers. Components of this course include an organized base of knowledge, competencies, definitions, theories, and research. There have been 348 nurses trained at Mission who function as Holistic Resource Nurses.

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Through the Integrative Program, we offer Healing Touch Program classes which are available to both staff at Mission and the community at large. Healing Touch Program participants gain an in-depth understanding and practice of energy work using scientifically supported techniques that complement conventional medical practice, as well as, other therapeutic treatments. Nurses at Mission hospital are required to complete at least a Level 1 Healing Touch class prior to providing Healing Touch services to patients. There have been 359 nurses and community members trained in Healing Touch classes since Mission Hospital began offering these classes in April of 2009.

The Pet Therapy Care team joined the Integrative Health Care department in April 2009. The program currently has 88 dogs and 100 human volunteers serving Mission Hospital system. Studies have shown that the presence of pets has a positive effect on human physiology, decreasing blood pressure and reducing heart rate. The program touches lives in our community through the healing power of pets by spreading smiles, comfort, and love to hospital patients of all ages, helping children and youth in schools and community agencies to reach their full potential and lending a helping paw to anyone experiencing loneliness, isolation or other emotional issues in a variety of settings.

The Integrative Healthcare Department began offering selected complementary therapies in August 2009. The therapies include Aromatherapy, Guided Imagery, Healing Touch, and Mind/Body therapies. Evaluation and requests for healing therapies may be requested by the physician, patient, primary nurse, or family. We have received over 13,000 requests for Holistic Nursing Consults since the program began in 2009. The patients' primary reason for requesting a Holistic consult is for comfort or stress reduction (50%), followed by pain (32%) and anxiety (15%). Patients received Healing Touch a majority of the time (57%), followed by massage (24%) and aromatherapy (7%). Analysis of response

to holistic interventions demonstrated a significant decrease in vital signs pre and post intervention and a significant decrease in pain and anxiety scores post intervention.

About the author:



Lourdes Lorenz is the Director of Integrative Healthcare at Mission Hospital in Asheville, North Carolina. An RN for almost 30 years, she has extensive experience in critical care. Lorenz is currently working towards her doctorate in Healthcare Administration. She is board certified as an Advanced Holistic Nurse and an Advanced Nurse Executive, and is a Healing Touch apprentice. Lorenz has presented at the national meeting for the American Holistic Nurses Association and at the worldwide Healing Touch Program. She was published in 2009 in the Journal of Emergency Nursing. Lorenz serves as a member of the Health Advisory Council for the Institute of Emerging Issues, a public policy institution in Raleigh, NC, and on several non-profit community boards. She recently was appointed to the American Nurses Association Congress on Nursing Practice and Economics.