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Shore Health's Awarded Reiki Program: Strategy and Outcomes

Written by John Weeks

Friday, 14 July 2006

Shore Health's Awarded Reiki Program: Strategy and Outcomes



SHORE HEALTH SYSTEM
UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND MEDICAL SYSTEM



Summary: Reiki is making headway in US hospitals. Last March, a Maryland newspaper gave one of these programs, at **Memorial Hospital** in the **Shore Health System** some local visibility when it was granted a "Health Care Heroes" award. This article, a second look at integrative medicine programs at Shore Health (see **prior IBN&R article**), examines the structure and outcomes of the Reiki program which led to this award. Note that between the original article and this, Shore has become part of the **University of Maryland Medical System**.



David Mercier,
LAC, integrative
leader, Shore
Health

The July 2004 proposal to the Medical Executive Committee at **Memorial Hospital** at **Shore Health** on Maryland's Eastern Shore had some surprising elements. The medical team was being asked to consider an unconventional therapy (Reiki), new types of providers (certified Reiki therapists), surprising delivery method (teams of two or three therapists at a time), and atypical scheduling (evenings only, five nights a week). And all this was being proposed by a project developer with a background which was also not typical for the hospital: licensed acupuncturist **David Mercier, LAC**.

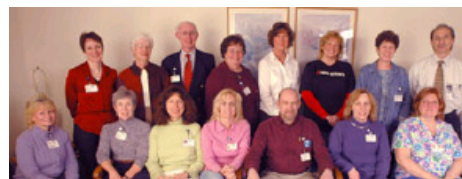
However, this proposal for delivering this energy therapy had three additional elements which certainly helped the medical committee digest and approve the non-conventional ideas.

Mercier presented the project as a pilot, with a plan to measure outcomes.

He provided evidence of prior positive outcome in similar hospital environment, particularly using data developed by **Molly Punzo, MD**, at **Hartford Hospital** in Connecticut.

A cost structure which made exploration especially palatable: services were to be delivered by team of volunteers.

Twenty months later, the program and the Reiki therapists received the **Health Care Heroes** award from the **Baltimore Daily Record**.



Shore's Reiki volunteers (photo Baltimore Daily Record)

Shore Health Reiki Program: At a Glance

Project developer	David Mercier, LAC
Location	Memorial Hospital at Easton
Staff	30 volunteers
Scheduling	2 or 3 hour shifts, 5 nights/week
Delivery	2 or 3 therapists together (4 or 6 hands);

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Outcomes measure	Visual Analog Scale, pre and post treatment, on pain, anxiety and malaise
Approval	Medical executive committee, plus Departments of Medicine, Surgery, Orthopedics, Institutional Review Board
Total treatments	Approx. 190
Project duration	9 months
Current status	Expansion to rehab and multi-specialty care units; also delivered to staff

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The project proposal developed by Mercier, and shared with *IBN&R*, goes to great lengths to address concerns the medical staff might have. Particular attention was paid to practitioner selection. All were required to be interviewed by the project manager (Mercier), attend training sessions led by a Reiki practitioner, and participate in a special orientation program.



Mercier also provided an elaborate, 16 point "Protocol" for the program. Eight patient selection criteria were enumerated. These included such characteristics as having no psychiatric, chemical dependency or dementia diagnoses, and basic alertness. All had to agree to participate in filling out the Visual Analogue Scale, pre and post, in which patients were asked to rate their condition on a scale of 1 to 10. The therapy was explicitly categorized as a "comfort measure."

Shore Health Reiki Program: Preliminary Pilot Project Outcomes
 (at four months)

Project developer	David Mercier, LAc
	19.3% saw reduction of -4 or greater 9% saw reduction of -6 or greater
Pain	Pre, 63% scored pain at 5+, vs 35% post; mean reduction: 2.31 (N=88, P<.0001)
	35.5% saw reduction of -4 or greater 13.1% saw reduction of -6 or greater
Anxiety	Pre, 60.7% scored anxiety at 5+, vs 17.9% post; mean reduction: 2.80 (N=84, P<.0001)
	32.6% saw reduction of -4 or greater 14.1% saw reduction of -6 or greater
Malaise	Pre, 69.6% scored malaise at 5+, vs 16.9% post; mean reduction: 2.94 (N=94, P<.0001)

Outcomes proved strong and positive across the three areas measured: pain, anxiety and malaise. The program has since expanded. Following initial success in one wing of the hospital, Mercier, who directs for the **Shore Health Center for Integrative Medicine**, helped expand the services into a second wing and into the hospital's inpatient rehab program.

Resources Available: Shore's Mercier has agreed to make two excellent resources available to anyone who is interested. One is the 6-page proposal he used to gain approval through the diverse medical committees. The second is an excellent, 6-page manual for the participating Reiki practitioners. Please contact Mercier at **This email address is being protected from spam bots, you need Javascript enabled to view it** . Thanks to both Mercier and Shore for making these resources available.



Molly Punzo, MD
- early work
helped Shore
case statement

Comment: As part of any hospital's efforts to create more patient-centered care, Reiki programs are excellent additions. I took a particular interest in seeing the work of Molly Punzo, MD, at Connecticut's **Hartford Hospital**, referenced by Mercier and his group. I had an opportunity to interview Punzo when she originally engaged her work there, in 2000, as Hartford's first director of integrative medicine. Notably, the outcomes referenced in Mercier's proposal are from an **internal Hartford pdf file** and not from a publication in a peer-reviewed journal. The practical moral here is that important healthcare decisions may be made based on honorably gathered data, even if self-published. Here's hoping the outcomes from Shore Health in this *IBN&R* article will assist some one of you in bringing Reiki to those you serve!

Last Updated (Tuesday, 18 July 2006)

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