



Dr. Abram Hoffer Wins the Inaugural Dr. Rogers Prize

Abram Hoffer has won the inaugural Dr. Rogers Prize for Excellence in Complementary and Alternative Medicine for his decades of work in establishing orthomolecular medicine.

The \$250,000 award, funded by the philanthropic Hecht Foundation and presented in Vancouver on November 1, 2007, is the first of its kind in Canada and the largest in North America. The prize is named for Dr. Roger Rogers, a University of British Columbia Clinical Associate Professor Emeritus, who is also a recognized Canadian leader in complementary and alternative medicine. Dr. Rogers began offering alternative treatments in Vancouver in the mid-1970s and later co-founded the Centre for Integrated Healing, now known as Inspire Health, to help cancer patients who have had limited or no success with traditional medical treatments. The award was shared with co-winner Dr. Alastair Cunningham of Toronto, creator of "The Healing Journey," a non-profit program that helps cancer patients use relaxation and mental imagery to cope with the disease. Drs. Hoffer and Cunningham were selected from 57 nominees after a nationwide call earlier this year. During lengthy deliberations, the judges attempted to arrive at a consensus for a single winner, but judged that the

contributions of these two recipients were of equal importance in terms of their impact on complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) in Canada and decided that the Prize should be shared.

Dr. Hoffer thanked those who stood with him over the years. He wrote: "Thank you so much for your messages, which came flooding in yesterday and today. It does feel good to be recognized after nearly five decades of blood, sweat, and toil and even more because this will draw attention to the important work we are all doing and will save many more patients from the real ravages of modern vertical medicine."

Angela Webster, the executive director of the Hecht Foundation, called Hoffer a true pioneer. "His idea that nutrition is the basis for health and also a very good place to look to find the causes of disease is now mainstream," she said in an interview. "When he was first saying that in the '60s and '70s, it was heretical."

Dr. Hoffer was inspired to explore nutritional medicine while working as research director for Saskatchewan's public health department in 1950. Half the patients in the province's three large hospitals were schizophrenic.

"Going into a mental hospital in 1950 was a life sentence without time off for good behavior," Hoffer

recalled. With his friend, double Nobel Prize laureate Linus Pauling, he came up with what is now known as orthomolecular medicine. After beginning to treat patients according to this revolutionary idea, he said, "I didn't feel the full blast of the onslaught until I went into private practice in 1967. People thought I was a very good researcher until I started saying nasty things like I could cure schizophrenic patients." Hoffer now views his 50-year reputation as a maverick with equanimity. "Every idea in medicine has to run a 40-year gauntlet before it gets accepted."

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