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*"treating the cause of your problem, not just the symptoms"*

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## Use of Alternative Medicine is Increasing Dramatically!

The Angus Reid Group is a non-biased independent company that performs hundreds to thousands of "polls" on all kinds of topics. I recently came across the results of a recent poll that asked many questions about Canadian usage of "alternative" or "complimentary" forms of health care. Some of the findings are listed below:

- 1) There has been an 81% *overall* increase in the use of alternative therapies since 1992 alone. This was further broken down to: *adults aged 35-54* have increased their usage by 76%, and *adults aged 18-34* have increased their usage by a surprising 146%.
- 2) 42% of Canadians use alternative medicine. One half of the 42% are females 35-54 years old.
- 3) British Columbia has the highest rate of usage at 56%, with 76% of adults aged 35-54 using alternative medicine.
- 4) 45% of Canadians who use alternative medicine had just started since 1992. This supports the well-documented perception that in the last ten years there has been a rapid, dramatic surge in the usage of alternative medicine.
- 5) Of all types, Chiropractic is the most popular, used by 59% of those using alternative medicine.
- 6) Satisfaction with alternative medicine is rated very high, as 90% of users say they are "very" (48%) or somewhat (42%) pleased with the results.
- 7) Nearly half of alternative medicine users (48%) stated they use these practices because they are not harmful and are helpful. 34% said their choice is based on the perception that conventional medicine no longer works for them. 23% said it is because of concerns about prescription medicines and conventional medical procedures.
- 8) 66% of the people polled believed that the Canadian government should advocate the use of alternative therapies to reduce the overall cost of medical care.

For today's health care practitioners, medical or non-medical, these results demonstrate the ongoing shift in the average Canadian's beliefs about healthcare. It is apparent that the days of one practitioner determining the type

and duration of all other kinds of treatment are over. This is not necessarily because they have done a poor job. It is more to do with the baby boomers and their next generation playing a more active and controlling role in their own health. These patients have placed themselves at the top of the hierarchy of who decides what form of treatment they will receive. In fact, they may even consult two or more completely different types of practitioners before deciding, for themselves, which they feel is best for their problem. I personally believe that it is better if the patient is able to make an informed choice.

Canadians have also begun to recognize that no single healthcare practitioner can help with everything. Each has a “scope of practice” or service that they can offer. With all the options out there now, the patient is really like a consumer shopping for a new car. With this freedom of choice also come potential problems. Just like shopping for that new car, this means “buyer beware”, as there are many unlicensed and uninsured practitioners out there that may actually pose a risk to your health. Be sure you do your homework first and that that the reference material you use is from a reliable source. It is also a good idea to ask the opinion of your more regulated practitioners (such as Medical doctors, Chiropractic doctors, Massage Therapists, Nurses, Nutritionists, Physiotherapists, Pharmacists, etc.) before making any major decisions on your own.