

Wednesday 16th March 2005

To: The Secretary
Senate Community Affairs References Committee
Suite S1 59
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Subject: The inquiry into services and treatment options for patients with cancer

Dear Secretary,

When I began my journey in February 2000, I was keen to embrace an Orthodox and Natural approach to Breast Cancer. Although a multidisciplinary tactic to my wellness was suggested in the reading material, when I inquired whom my Naturopath, Homeopath and Chinese Herbalist would be, the silence was deafening. I was soon to realise there was no methodology in place to support the delivery of my request for other modalities. There was also an observable culture of resistance, to the pursuit of legitimate objectives, by a broad range of those in positions of power in the Medical arena.

In 2004 the Cancer returned. My experience this time round was very different, but then so was the disease. The final Diagnoses: Liver, lung kidney, left breast now two lumps, an external tumor on my left side, lymph nodes, neck, right sixth rib, a moth eaten left hip lower spine and pelvic area. On top of this I had lost my peripheral vision in my left eye and was unable to walk unassisted as my right leg and hand didn't function as normal due to the 7 tumors on the brain.

This time I searched for practioners that were willing to work together. Over the past 12 months my journey has been amazing. I was able to collaborate with 4 different practioners. My medical hero's, are **Dr.Qi Chen**, a Chinese Oncologist who has been practicing Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) for over twenty-three years.

Professor Martin Tattersall of RPA with 30 years experience and Australia's first Professor of Oncology. **Michael Trembath** who works on aligning both the physical structure and vibrational balance of the body. **Alistair Gray**, a Practioner in Homeopathic Medicine. A discipline committed to the seamless dynamic health of the mind, the emotions, and the physical body.

In the beginning we agreed that they were free to discuss any part of my treatment with each other. I would have regular visits with them – some weekly, some monthly, to have treatments. I was empowered with understanding, knowledge and support to make informed decisions.

My champion is Dr.Qi Chen. What impressed me most is his knowledge and understanding of both Orthodox medicines and TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine). The basis of his treatment was to support my immune system and strengthen my soldiers “T” cells to fight. My decision not to take an orthodox approach was met with fear and apprehension from my family, friends and loved ones, simply because they knew only of a traditional approach. They have observed me closely over the past 12 months and are astonished at my return to health and remission.

Rarely does a day go past without a conversation about health. The more people I speak to the more I hear of such stories and desire for something in addition to their current treatment. I have recommended Dr.Chen to many, many people and not only for cancer. I would encourage you to read his website and see for yourself www.chineseherbalmedicine.com.au.

I believe I would not be here today if not for Dr.Chen and his ability to collaborate and manage the politics that surround this approach in the Orthodox field.

We have a responsibility to share these experiences and give other patients the options, remembering we must also respect their choices. We are more than capable of combining many facets of medicine to establish a truly integrated approach and whilst we are at it, a Healthcare system that supports these modalities. This will only happen and be sustainable through continuing education.

Through the course of the past 5 years, I have come to the conclusion that there is an urgent need for a place or center where information of this nature is readily available, with an integrated approach to wellness. There must also be a program of attitudinal change. There is an equally urgent and important need for a program of education and development for all, while currently, clearly the responsibility of education falls to those inflicted with this illness and their carers’.

Some of the fundamental questions of concern from both sides of the fence are:

1. Who is the organization/foundation and who are they there to serve?
2. What are the outcomes?

3. The protocol and of course what are the priorities?

Having addressed those questions, the next layer of concern will be;

- a) The mechanisms by which the organisation is directed and controlled and
- b) The mechanism by which those who direct and control the organisation are supervised.

Most importantly is to securing the involvement of all disciplines to make educated decisions. This must extend to the highest levels.

I have attached my story.

I look forward to the opportunity of discussing this with you at the public hearing to be held in Sydney.

Regards

Lisa Whittaker

Survivor & Advocate