



## Reiki in Hospitals

*William Lee Rand at [www.reiki.org](http://www.reiki.org)*

At hospitals and clinics across America, Reiki is beginning to gain acceptance as a meaningful and cost-effective way to improve patient care. "Reiki sessions cause patients to heal faster with less pain," says Marilyn Vega, RN, a private-duty nurse at the Manhattan Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital in New York. [Reiki] accelerates recovery from surgery, improves mental attitude and reduces the negative effects of medication and other medical procedures.

Vega, a Reiki master, includes Reiki with her regular nursing procedures. Because the patients like Reiki, she has attracted a lot of attention from other patients through word of mouth, as well as from members of the hospital staff. Patients have asked her to do Reiki on them in the operating and recovery rooms. She has also been asked to do Reiki sessions on cancer patients at Memorial Sloane Kettering Hospital, including patients with bone marrow transplants. Recognizing the value of Reiki in patient care, 6 doctors and 25 nurses have taken Reiki training with her.

### America's Interest in Complementary Health Care

The general public is turning with ever-increasing interest to complementary health care, including Reiki. In fact, a study conducted by Dr. David M. Eisenberg of Boston's Beth Israel Hospital found that one in every three Americans has used such care, spending over 14 billion out-of-pocket dollars on alternative health care in 1990 alone!<sup>1</sup>

Reiki is also gaining wider acceptance in the medical establishment. Some hospitals are incorporating it into their roster of patient services, often with their own Reiki-trained physicians, nurses and support staff.

### Why Hospitals Like Reiki

Hospitals are undergoing major changes. They are experiencing a need to reduce costs and at the same time improve patient care. Under the old medical model based on expensive medication and technology this posed an unsolvable dilemma. Not so with Reiki and other complementary modalities. Reiki requires no technology at all and many of its practitioners offer their services for free. Reiki is therefore a very good way to improve care while cutting costs.

Julie Motz, a Reiki trained healer has worked with Dr. Mehmet Oz, a noted cardiothoracic surgeon at Columbia Presbyterian Medical Center in New York. Motz uses Reiki and other subtle energy techniques to balance the patients energy during operations. She has assisted Dr. Oz in the operating room during open heart surgeries and heart transplants. Motz reports that none of the 11 heart patients so treated experienced the usual postoperative depression, the bypass patients had no postoperative pain or leg weakness; and the transplant patients experienced no organ rejection.

An article in the Marin Independent Journal follows Motz's work at the Marin General Hospital in Marin County, California, just north of San Francisco<sup>2</sup>. There Motz has used subtle energy healing techniques with patients in the operating room. She makes a point of communicating caring feelings and positive thoughts to the patients, and has been given grants to work with mastectomy patients in particular.



Dr. David Guillion, an oncologist at Marin General, has stated "I feel we need to do whatever is in our power to help the patient. We provide state of the art medicine in our office, but healing is a multidimensional process. . . . I endorse the idea that there is a potential healing that can take place utilizing energy."

#### Reiki at Portsmouth Regional Hospital

The Reiki sessions are given by 20 members of the hospital staff whom Patricia has trained in Reiki. These include RN's, physical therapists, technicians and medical records and support staff. Reiki services began in April 1997, and 400 patients have received sessions to date either pre or postoperatively.

"It has been an extremely rewarding experience," Alandydy says, "to see Reiki embraced by such a diverse group of people and spread so far and wide by word of mouth, in a positive light. Patients many times request a Reiki [session] based on the positive experience of one of their friends. It has also been very revealing to see how open-minded the older patient population is to try Reiki. In the hospital setting Reiki is presented as a technique which reduces stress and promotes relaxation, thereby enhancing the body's natural ability to heal itself."

Because of these positive results that have been demonstrated, Reiki has gained credibility with the physicians and other staff members. It is now being requested from other care areas of the hospital to treat anxiety, chronic pain, cancer and other conditions.

Alandydy, with her partner Greda Cocco, also manage a hospital-supported Reiki clinic through their business called Seacoast Complementary Care, Inc. The clinic is open two days a week and staffed by 50 trained Reiki volunteers, half of whom come from the hospital staff and the rest from the local Reiki community. They usually have 13-17 Reiki tables in use at the clinic with 1-2 Reiki volunteers per table. The clinic treats a wide range of conditions including HIV, pain, and side-effects from chemotherapy and radiation. Some patients are referred by hospital physicians and some come by word of mouth from the local community. They are charged a nominal fee of \$10.00 per session. The clinic is full each night and often has a waiting list.#

#### The California Pacific Medical Center's Reiki Program

The California Pacific Medical Center is one of the largest hospitals in northern California. Its Health and Healing Clinic, a branch of the Institute for Health and Healing, provides care for both acute and chronic illness using a wide range of complementary care including Reiki, Chinese medicine, hypnosis, biofeedback, acupuncture, homeopathy, herbal therapy, nutritional therapy and aromatherapy. The clinic has six treatment rooms and is currently staffed by two physicians, Dr. Mike Cantwell and Dr. Amy Saltzman. Cantwell, a pediatrician specializing in infectious diseases, is also a Reiki Master with training in nutritional therapy. Saltzman specializes in internal medicine and also has training in mindfulness meditation, acupuncture and nutritional therapy. Other professionals are waiting to join the staff, including several physicians.

The doctors at the clinic work with the patients and their referring physicians to determine what complementary modalities will be appropriate for the patient. A detailed questionnaire designed to provide a holistic overview of the patient's condition is used to help decide the course of treatment. The questionnaire involves a broad range of subjects including personal satisfaction with relationships, friends and family, with body image, and with job, career, and spirituality. The clinic is very popular and currently has a waiting list of more than 100 patients.

Dr. Cantwell provides 1-3 hour-long Reiki sessions, after which he assigns the patient to a Reiki II internist who continues to provide Reiki sessions outside the clinic. Patients who continue to respond well to the Reiki treatments are referred for Reiki training so they can continue Reiki self-treatments on a continuing basis.



Dr. Cantwell states: "I have found Reiki to be useful in the treatment of acute illnesses such as musculoskeletal injury/pain, headache, acute infections, and asthma. Reiki is also useful for patients with chronic illnesses, especially those associated with chronic pain."

At this point, Reiki is not covered by insurance at the clinic, but Dr. Cantwell is conducting clinical research in the hope of convincing insurance companies that complementary care is viable and will save them money.<sup>4</sup>

More MD's and Nurses Practicing Reiki

Mary Lee Radka is a Reiki Master and an R.N. who has the job classification of Nurse-Healer because of her Reiki skills. She teaches Reiki classes to nurses and other hospital staff at the University of Michigan Hospital in Ann Arbor. She also uses Reiki with most of her patients. She has found Reiki to produce the best results in reducing pain and stress, improving circulation and eliminating nerve blocks.