

In health care, ‘hope is not a strategy’

A two-pronged approach clears path to wellness

BY DR. CHRISTOPHER CIANCI

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On Oct. 8 of last year, 63-year-old Mettah Kollmann began a journey back to wellness.

Having put up with pain in her right shoulder and lower back for longer than she cares to recall, she was determined to find relief – and celebrate appropriately – in the New Year.

Mettah and her husband, Geoffrey, both former federal government employees, came to Easton from the Western Shore seven years ago, following their somewhat concurrent retirements.

They had visited here often and taken the town and the Eastern Shore into their hearts.

“It’s a wonderful place for biking,” she said of Easton and environs, “and we loved the lack of hustle and bustle.”

But arthritic problems and their associated discomfort, made her new life less than idyllic.

“I did the standard medical treatments,” she said, an injection in the spine which brought relief for about six months, she said, and she underwent rotator cuff surgery.

Again, no permanent relief. “The original pain came back,” she said.

Discouraged but determined to avoid additional surgery either on the shoulder or the lower back if at all possible, she called the office of Easton chiropractor, Dr. Christopher Cianci for an appointment.

It wasn’t that she was unfamiliar with chiropractic care. She had visited a chiropractor many years ago for a neck problem, she said, “and it had helped.” But she had not considered chiropractic in terms of her current discomforts.

That is, until she read Dr. Cianci’s column in the Nov. 7, 2010 edition of the Star-Democrat, discussing the Webster Technique, a specific chiropractic adjustment which corrected what would have been a breeched birth.

“I was sold,” Mettah said. “I thought if he can do that, he can certainly help me. I thought what have I got to lose?”

Mrs. Kollmann’s case was familiar to Dr. Cianci in that, he said, “the real cause of the problem was never addressed. The other approaches, whether they be drugs or injections, are a cover-up for the real problem.”

Finding “the real problem” is the challenge.

That is accomplished, Dr. Cianci said, with specialized tests to determine what area of the nervous system is involved and, thus, what nerves are affected.

“This way we can be specific in the care we offer rather than a shotgun approach and rather than hoping we are working on the right area.”

Dr. Cianci offered this mantra. “When it comes to helping chronic long-standing conditions, hope is not a strategy.”

So, in Mrs. Kollmann’s case, two areas of concern – the lower back and the right shoulder.

After pinpointing, via the various testing procedures, the spinal levels which were out of position and specifically which nerve levels were affected, Dr. Cianci decided that the best course of action would be “specific spinal adjustments directed at the involved spinal segments” and as for the shoulder -- which even despite previous surgery was still causing problems -- the cold laser therapy.

“Had we not taken this two-pronged approach,” Dr/ Cianci said, “Mrs. Kollmann would continue to suffer.”

Cold laser therapy, the Easton chiropractor explained, is an advanced form of state-of-the-art physical therapy.

Unlike other forms of therapy, such as ultra-sound or electrical stimulation that only penetrate to the muscular level, cold laser is faster and more effective because it penetrates to the cellular level and is capable of not only decreasing pain and inflammation but of significantly speeding up the healing process.

Dr. Cianci said that “the Kollmans are a perfect example of people who move to the Eastern Shore so they can enjoy retirement and all the activities the Shore has to offer, only to find that their aging bodies won’t allow them to fully enjoy the Shore’s famous lifestyle.”

And he added: “It’s rewarding to play a part in helping them do that.”

Yes, the Kollmanns. Plural. Geoffrey Kollman now accompanies his wife to her appointments and he, too, gets an adjustment.

“It’s a lower back problem,” Mettah quickly explained, “exacerbated by golf.”

Cold laser therapy was not indicated in his case, Dr. Cianci said, adding with a wry smile, “Cold laser works on most problems, but I have yet to see it help a golf swing.”