



## Becoming Cancer Aware: Insights from the Second Wellness for Cancer Roundtable, the Mayo Clinic Rochester, Minnesota

On May 4, 2018, the Global Wellness Institute's *Wellness for Cancer Initiative* hosted a roundtable and interactive forum at the Mayo Clinic Well Living Lab. The discussion was moderated by Julie Bach, founder, Wellness for Cancer, Brent Bauer, MD, director of research integrative medicine, Mayo Clinic, and Lisa Corbin, MD, director of executive health services, former director of integrative medicine, University of Colorado. Eighteen medical and spa/wellness experts participated and identified steps to move the spa industry forward in serving clients who have–or have experienced–cancer. We asked participants to share their insights and takeaways from the forum.

### What was your biggest takeaway from the Roundtable?

#### VALUE OF THE WORK

- I feel what resonated deeply was the opportunity we have in the spa industry to support those that are in need. We are healers, givers and helpers. Our technicians are called to this work. Cancer does not discriminate and places for healing should be accessible to everyone who is in need. We, as spa directors, builders and providers, need to move beyond the fear of liability and stand up for care giving and human connection.
- For me, it was the amazing global support for helping people touched by cancer at every stage of the journey and the many modalities that can be modified to make the journey both safe and effective.
- My big take away was how fantastic it is that institutions such as Mayo Clinic and University of Colorado are supporting the idea that people who have or have had cancer should be able to access spa and wellness services–and provide more education and understanding about the value of many of the modalities. It was very heartening to see the medical arena and the wellness arena working together.
- My biggest takeaway definitely was to realize all the effort the wellness industry is devoting towards those who have had or have cancer. It was really important for me to see rigorous and innovative methodologies, built over time, in all wellness disciplines targeted to all clients – but especially those that take into account the constraints and challenges that might be faced by a someone who has had a brush with cancer.
- My biggest takeaway was that this was a unique way to brainstorm and the Roundtable should be repeated twice a year.

#### IDEAS TO CONSIDER

- It might be wise to consider not training all spa therapists to be medical massage therapists but just to be comfortable treating people with a history of cancer who are seeking spa services for non-cancer related issues (as Julie is doing).
- I had the perception, once more, that integrative medicine is highly important for the treatment of cancer. And there are also many ways to care in this journey, like well



nutrition, a good sleep, mind-body therapies and exercises that are extremely important. These can change the old approach for the cancer patient.

- A further effort should be made to harmonize guidelines and protocols, as well as all the academic, medical and scientific information because we want our clients to have accurate and precise information regarding their possibilities in the wellness sector for improving their quality of life. We want them to feel safe and able to choose a wellness treatment or routine based on research and evidence.
- There needs to be a collective agreement in the industry about how to address people with cancer and other health conditions. This needs to be comprehensive including legal liability and support functions w/in spa's and wellness centers.

#### LIABILITY CONCERNS

- There are challenges regarding liability and/or the perception of liability that surrounds the provision of services to clients who have been touched by cancer. It seems like addressing this in a fundamental way is going to be necessary before widespread availability of services can occur.
- I was not aware that there was so much concern about the liability issue. I guess I am so used to liability issues since I live in the US, that there is no way to get totally ahead of it or ever resolve it. If there is too much focus on liability, it can cause paralysis. If I were concerned about every potential liability issue that comes across my journey in this world, it would interfere with the work I can contribute. While some general guidelines might be helpful and the protocols and program designed should take this issue into consideration, I would leave liability issues to the legal world and move forward focusing on what Wellness for Cancer can contribute.

#### What did you learn that was new to you?

- I was surprised to learn the volume of people being turned away in the industry simply because these guests are receiving oncology treatments. I was pleased to learn that there are many advocates in other countries incorporating medical, spa and wellness together. I did not realize the efforts, time and dollars required to conduct evidence studies and trials.
- I was surprised by the breadth of treatments and approaches from around the world that are currently being offered to clients who have been touched by cancer. The skills and knowledge are there, the patients/clients are there - bringing them together in a safe and efficacious manner routinely is the goal that needs to be addressed. It appears there is a need for a dedicated champion (such as Wellness For Cancer) to serve as a focal point for what must be global efforts.
- The spa industry is moving into wellness - very exciting and a huge potential to support the self-care that is critical to a healthy population.
- The challenge of raising money for the initiative to go ahead... but more and more people supporting this cause.
- None of it was necessarily new to me because I am emerged in it, but it was fascinating to hear everyone's personal take on the various topics.
- The challenges that my cancer patients face when looking for wellness services.



- The fact that chronic diseases continue to spread.
- I had no idea that most of the industry had their head in the sand and wanted to avoid knowing about cancer or other serious health conditions. The issues around liability and how to avoid causing further injury to someone undergoing treatment are tightly tied together. Having a medical spa with health professionals clearly helps in this regard.

#### Is there anything else you would like to share?

- For future conferences, it would be beneficial to hear from practitioners (clinicians treating cancer patients) on what wellness services they are promoting to their patients and why – this was actually covered!
- More collaboration with spa and health care, I'd love to be involved!
- Just a note of gratitude to all the participants who came from all over to meet in Rochester, Minnesota – a sometimes challenging travel location!
- I think Julie is such an inspiration and her following and the support she is receiving speaks volumes for her efforts and passion. I have been teaching health and fitness professionals to become Cancer Exercise Specialists since 1996 and have never seen this kind of support in the fitness industry. Hopefully with each of our efforts combined, we will continue to make great headway in the area of survivorship.
- The future in medicine is to be there before any major problems occur. Unlocking the mysteries of genome will lead to improved health.
- I was very impressed with the quality of the people and the discussions that occurred at the roundtable. It was enlightening and enjoyable.
- The oncology/wellness massage movement faces very similar challenges as our CBD product line. There is a great deal of fear and stigma associated to both. Education is important. Changing the language is key. We need to remove the barriers and enroll others into a vision of supporting our fellow human beings during times of need. This will be done through arming our teams with the proper training, opening the minds and hearts of executives who are programmed to look for what can go wrong and instead embrace what could go right. Everyday we are providing services in our spa facilities that can hold us liable. We have implemented guidelines for some treatments and there is no reason to have a different set of rules for those affected by cancer. I believe anything one can envision is possible. I am grateful to have had the chance to contribute to this effort. I look forward to being in service to this mission in any way I can.
- I would love to still be part of the Wellness for Cancer Initiative and help them in their efforts. My non-profit's main goal is to improve cancer patients and their family's quality of life. I think I could be a strong arm of the initiative in Mexico and continue to learn from the Wellness for Cancer Initiative and its powerful network and tools.
- Kurotel is open to share and cooperate with new research for cancer, prevention and treatment.
- Everyone who attended is really passionate about this....very encouraging.



### **Final words from Julie Bach**

“I’d like to thank everyone who attended this roundtable to move the conversation – and the industry – forward when it comes to safely treating our guests who have had cancer as normal wellness-seeking guests. The event achieved what I’d hoped it would, including the continued joint development of cancer-aware guidelines with the medical industry. We also were able to secure some much-needed donations to help fund research, which I’m so grateful for – this will help us proceed as a viable wellness industry initiative.”

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