



Chieftain photo/John Jaques

**Practiced for 3,000 years,
acupuncture works, Troy
Sammons believes.**

Traditional CURES

Age-old medicine called a healthy choice

**By GAYLE PEREZ
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Troy Sammons is tired of hearing that alternative medicine methods are a hoax.

A licensed acupuncturist, Sammons said he has seen what his form of therapy has done for his patients and knows that it can be a viable form of medicine.

"Western doctors are not trained in injection therapy," Sammons said of the criticism his practice often receives from Western medical doctors. "Most doctors have little or no training in injection therapy and they are not knowledgeable in it. If they don't know about it, they become skeptical about it."

Sammons, who has been practicing in Pueblo for three years, said that doesn't mean alternative medicine - such as acupuncture, nutritional supplements, massage, aromatherapy and homeopathy - is a sham.

He said as more people begin to look for other ways to cure their ills, alternative medicine treatments will become more popular. But with its popularity, skepticism will increase as well.

"Doctors and therapists are being pressured more and more to give guidance of alternative methods," he said. "But many are still fearful of referring their patients out. They want to make sure their patients are safe."

Sammons said some doctors are leery of the practices because there are some alternative methods that do not require licensure and that means shams and frauds can occur.

"They just have to make sure that whoever they refer to is a competent and well-trained professional," he said. "They need to understand the medicine and the person's training."

Sammons said with increased support from Western medical doctors - many of whom are incorporating acupuncture in their treatment plans - the practices will become more accepted.

Already, Sammons said at least 43 percent of Western medical doctors are referring patients to acupuncture and other alternative methods, according to statistics in *Acupuncture Today*.

He added that the government also is doing more to aid in research of the alternative treatments by increasing funding to the Complementary and Alternative Medicines research project.

"There is a big movement developing to do more research," Sammons said. "Right now, there is such a plethora of research out there on the outcomes of acupuncture."

Sammons said locally he has received a lot of support from doctors but there are still those who are skeptical of the practice.

"For the most part, I haven't received grief from any doctor in the community," he said. "I think they are quite supportive of it but they are so inundated with their own workload that they cannot keep up on what is happening with alternative medicine methods."

Sammons said there also are some doctors who question the validity of nutritional supplements because they do not claim to cure specific ailments.

"My argument is neither do the pharmaceutical drug companies. They simply list the drugs and their side effects."

He said most people who suffer adverse reactions when taking supplements do so because they don't take them correctly.

Sammons said Americans are lucky to have alternative medicine methods as another health-care option.

"We are so lucky in the U.S. because we have so many types of medicine," he said. "When you have these types of medicines they eventually will be absorbed into the medical system. I think some of the best forms of alternative medicine will be incorporated into mainstream medicine."

Sammons said as the methods become more popular, patient success will continue to sell them.

"People who have had it, their results will speak for itself," he said. "If people weren't getting better, it (acupuncture) wouldn't be 3,000 years old."