

Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine  
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Alumni Magazine Issue No. 28 - Winter 2021



# Mind | Body | Spirit

Looking for  
Silver Linings  
during a  
Pandemic

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

Online medicine  
at the RSNC

The Wild Collective's  
virtual community


A message to  
the Class of 2020

Owen Wiseman (Class of 2020)



CCNM AND BOUCHER INTEND TO MERGE





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*Tanya Salituro*

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Clinic interns at the Robert Schad Naturopathic Clinic completed their clinical year virtually, thanks to Dr. Lindsey White, ND (Class of 2012) and the entire clinical team. Read more on page 6.

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Class of 2015 graduate Dr. Laura Belus, ND is one of Well.ca's featured practitioners. Read more about their relationship on page 24.

# CCNM and Boucher Intend to Merge



Bob Bernhardt, PhD, President & CEO

What kinds of silver linings can be found in 2020? In this issue, you'll discover examples of CCNM graduates and students who are adapting to this new and unprecedented reality with resiliency, resourcefulness, positivity, and by finding ways to move forward and grow as professionals.

At the heart of this is the realization that we must make the most of the opportunities that are presented to us and create our own silver linings.

## Merger Announcement

Many of you may have already heard the news that CCNM and the Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine announced an intent to merge on November 17. These initial talks began in June and continued through the

summer and fall months until we were finally able to share this exciting news with the wider community.

The two institutions will be known as CCNM, fusing our strong and highly respected traditions into one. The process will be gradual, with no immediate impact to the student or faculty experience. Over the next several months, we are planning a deep review of our systems and procedures with respect to student support, academics and curriculum, research, and clinical care. Ultimately, our goal is to enjoy the best of both worlds by retaining what we individually do very well.

What does our future look like? We will have our Toronto location and CCNM-Boucher campus in the greater Vancouver

area and work towards establishing branch educational operations across the country. By combining our joint expertise, we are setting ourselves up as a national and global leader in naturopathic medical education and research.

The message is clear – we are much stronger together when we are united as a community.

Reflecting on the silver linings in a time of difficulty is no doubt a challenge. My hope is that when these trying times are over, we all will have many silver linings to share.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Bernhardt".

Bob Bernhardt, PhD,  
President & CEO



Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine, Toronto, Ontario (left); Boucher Institute of Naturopathic Medicine, New Westminster, B.C. (right)



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It goes without saying that the COVID-19 pandemic has thrown our lives off balance. We are learning how to shift the ways we practice, teach and learn in ways no one anticipated.

Throughout the worst times, naturopathic doctors are here. Our communities rely on us to deliver vital health-care services, to listen and to understand. And we are discovering more about ourselves – how to slow down, reprioritize our health and wellness, and find joy in the little things.

**Yes, there are many SILVER LININGS to be found.**



# Online Medicine a Success at CCNM's Teaching Clinic

Under the direction of Dr. Lindsey White, ND  
(Class of 2012), interns completed their  
clinical year virtually





Back on March 11, when the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic, CCNM was already in the middle of laying down plans to move its academic program and clinical services online. As cases of the virus steadily increased in Ontario, non-essential businesses began shutting their doors and offices told their employees to work remotely.



The clinical team had only eight business days to get roughly 65 clinic supervisors and 100 interns up to speed on the doxy.me online platform.

On March 13, in-person visits to the Robert Schad Naturopathic Clinic (RSNC) ceased, and by March 26, the clinic had shifted completely to virtual patient visits.

The transition was not without a few bumps and hiccups along the way – as Director of Clinical Services Dr. Lindsey White, ND (Class of 2012) explains, finding an online provider that could accommodate both virtual care (at a time when every other organization was pivoting online) and the RSNC’s particular specifications proved to be somewhat of a challenge.

“We have unique needs at RSNC – it’s not just a typical doctor and patient visit here. We’ve got the supervisor and intern interaction, and the supervisor needs to be able to come and go. We needed to make sure we had a platform that could do that and meet privacy requirements as well.”

In the end, after considering a few different options, the clinical team chose Doxy.me for its wide range of administrative support tools and high compliance standards. After the selection was made came the training process and only eight business days to get roughly 65 clinic supervisors and 100 interns up to speed.

There were many questions that needed to be addressed: How will patients book visits? How do the supervisors and interns discuss treatment plans? What will be the role of the receptionists? Can interns meet their clinical requirements in this fashion? And since the RSNC functions as a triangle – with reception, supervisors and interns occupying each point – how will everyone intersect and connect in this new, virtual environment?

By emphasizing communication, trust, feedback and engagement with each stakeholder throughout the transition period, Lindsey and her team made it work, to great success.

#### LINDSEY’S SILVER LINING

As a team we have many people working on the frontlines, and in different locations, so it can be challenging to meet all together. This virtual pivot has allowed us to come together more often and share information about work and talk about our personal lives.

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“We developed the training for the system and ran sessions for both our faculty and interns. We were all basically learning a new job.”

Dr. Lindsey White, ND (Class of 2012)

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“We developed the training for the system and ran sessions for both our faculty and interns. We were all basically learning a new job – clinic operations, for example, has never worked like this before. So our plan was communication. Communicate often, keep it short and hold venues where people can have conversations and ask questions. I think that’s what enabled us to be so successful – everyone worked really well together and were involved in the process throughout,” she says.

**Continuing with virtual care**

Virtual care for patients is ongoing and will remain in place indefinitely. There are many advantages to offering this type

of health-care service and patients have deeply appreciated being able to see their intern from home; however, Lindsey is concerned with the inequalities associated with this type of health-care service, specifically access to the technology that allows for virtual visits (working computer, wifi, phone, etc.)

Still, establishing a virtual connection with patients presents an exciting set of opportunities – ranging from marketing to analytics – which were otherwise unavailable.

“It’s huge – telemedicine just opens up time, space and flexibility in people’s lives that is much needed. We’ve been able to



Dr. Lindsey White, ND (top left) and Dr. Mitchell Zeifman, ND (bottom right) committed themselves to helping RSNIC interns, such as Class of 2020 graduates Michèle Webb (bottom left) and Ashley Florestal (top right), transition from in-person to online care.



attract patients that we couldn't before due to our location and now we can access them. People need naturopathic doctors more than ever and we were able to be there."

Patients were not the only ones grateful for virtual care at the RSNC – supervisors and interns could continue to see patients while staying safe. For the group of students that graduated in May 2020, virtual care granted them about six weeks to complete any outstanding clinical requirements.

To help manage the growing levels of anxiety that the interns were understandably facing, Lindsey and Associate Dean of Clinical Education, Dr. Mitchell Zeifman, ND (Class of 2003), made themselves available at all hours to anyone who needed it. "We worked really hard," Lindsey recalls. "We knew we were going to get everyone through this and we were constantly saying, 'Just trust us.'"

In May, when the current crop of interns entered clinic, the two funnelled their energy into training sessions and additional online support. For the entire month, if the interns were feeling unable to handle the pressures of offering virtual care remotely, they could reach out to either Mitchell or Lindsey during their shift if they required a helping hand.

These interns, now in their fourth and final year at CCNM, have taken to telemedicine exceptionally well and are becoming increasingly comfortable with the technology that patients will be expecting from their health-care providers in the future.

Will it become another service that the RSNC offers going forward? Lindsey isn't sure, but she definitely sees the many benefits for interns.

"How to manage a patient over the phone when you can't see them or through the video screen are huge learning curves but are also valuable lessons. This new cohort

is doing all their learning online right now, which is going to help them out when they graduate because the world is moving this way and they'll be ahead of the game.

"What I do know is we're going to continue to offer telemedicine at a high level and standard and ensure that educational requirements can also be met through this," she adds.

Lindsey admits there were a few sleepless nights along the way, but she credits Mitchell and the entire clinical operations team for their support, enthusiasm and dedication through these unprecedented times.

"I'm so proud of the clinic staff – everyone stepped up and out of their comfort zone. One positive thing is that this has actually brought our team closer together. Shoutout to everyone – faculty for being patient and accepting of how we were doing things, and the interns for going along for the ride. I know this is a cliché, but it really was a team effort."

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Virtual care for patients is ongoing and will remain in place indefinitely. There are many advantages to offering this type of health-care service and patients have deeply appreciated being able to see their intern from home.



Photo credit: Doxy.me

We spoke to two of our interns to find out their perspective on the clinical year. Although virtual care is not what Daiana and Laura expected when they started the Doctor of Naturopathy degree in September 2017, they're discovering the many silver linings.

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### Intern Spotlight - Laura Hoffmann

For Laura, telemedicine has come with a few surprising benefits. At home in the Kitchener/Waterloo area, she has been able to set up a dedicated office for patient visits. The need to travel for nearly two hours to CCNM has been reduced drastically, as she only needs to come in for in-person care for four consecutive days, and then work virtually the following week.

"It's been great to see patients in their home environment," she says. "They're able to show me their supplement bottles and I can get accurate information as to what they're taking. I've also noticed that many of my patients have had a reduction in stress and their diets have improved since they are working from home. Not needing to commute, eating on the go or worrying about being judged in the office has had a really positive impact on them."

One of the biggest lessons she has learned during the pandemic has been to accept the fact that plans will change - especially if you are getting married. Flexibility was key for Laura and her husband Evan, who wed on July 11. Happily, they were able to celebrate the big day with family and friends after restrictions on gatherings had eased in Ontario.

Had Laura developed a negative attitude, things may have turned out differently. But she focused on positive thinking and shifted her mindset to incorporate healthy coping mechanisms if life-altering changes occur again.

"We were unable to continue in-person studies, but I developed so many new skills with virtual care, like learning how to care for someone through the computer or phone call. Focusing more on lifestyle changes have really strengthened my clinical skills, and I've also learned just how valuable human connection is," Laura says. "Being able to sit with someone in a room and caring for them is something I took for granted before the pandemic. Now that we're back to in-person care, I value that one-on-one time so much more."



Top and middle: Evan and Laura Hoffmann on their wedding day.  
Bottom: Laura at CCNM's annual health fair.



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## Intern Spotlight: Daiana Castleman

Learning how to set boundaries has been an important lesson for Daiana. Before CCNM shifted online, she was constantly on the go, balancing her studies and her two part-time jobs at the College (one in the advancement department and the other in the library). It was the pandemic that forced Daiana to slow down and recognize that her lifestyle was neither healthy nor sustainable. Sticking to a consistent morning and night routine and unplugging her phone and laptop after work have been “night and day” for her health, which in turn has left her feeling more energized and ready to tackle any new challenges. It has also changed her outlook on online learning.

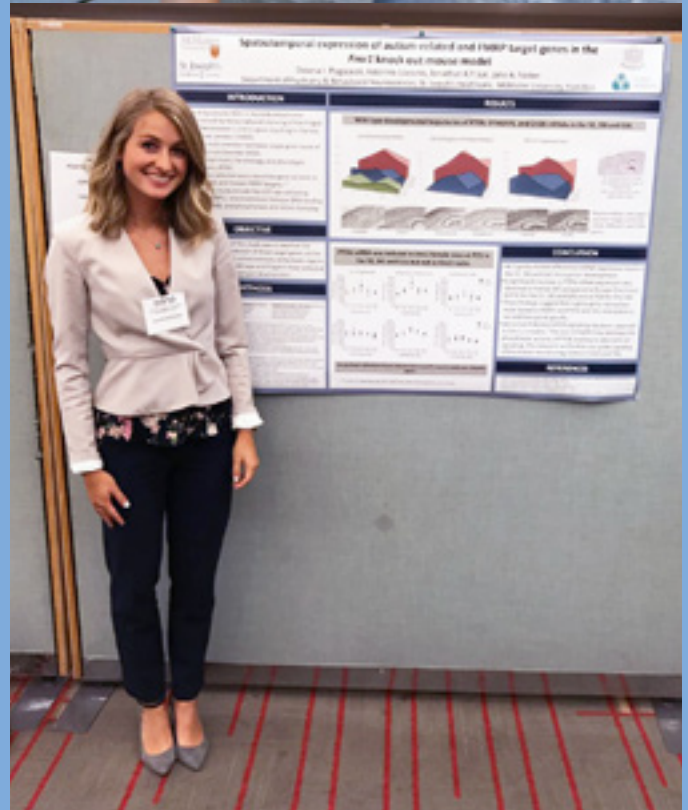
“I believed that it has its limits and we can only do so much with this space. But now I’ve realized that there are so many ways to be interactive, even online. Some of our supervisors are so creative with how they teach and mentor. I never thought about its potential, and now I know you can still get a very effective and efficient online learning experience,” she says.

Telemedicine has opened up a world of possibilities for Daiana. During patient visits, it has kept her on her toes to hammer out a treatment plan or recommendations since her clinic supervisors will drop in towards the middle or end of the call. And when she’s at home, she can maintain a work/life balance she has never enjoyed before.

She has also been inspired by her time preceptoring with Dr. Michelle Peris, ND (Class of 2009) (see Michelle’s story on page 36), whose community-based group sessions, called The Wild Collective, have changed the lives of many women. Virtual care is not just about the impact on one patient – it can also be about bringing health care to a wider set of people.

“The impact she’s had with these group sessions is beyond anything I could have thought in terms of care. I think these experiences have really opened my eyes to what is possible, post-CCNM, with my own practice. And the great thing is that now we know how to use virtual care, and that’s one less thing we have to learn after CCNM,” says Daiana.

**Learn more about Daiana at: [daianacastleman.com](http://daianacastleman.com)**



Daiana is an important member of CCNM's community.



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# Communication is the Key for Dr. Shawna Darou, ND

The pandemic may have forced everyone indoors, but the Class of 2003 graduate stayed connected





When Dr. Shawna Darou, ND (Class of 2003) established her integrative clinic five years ago, her goal was to create a gathering place and sense of community, for both patients and practitioners. So when the COVID-19 pandemic forced businesses to close, Shawna strove to maintain these standards even as the clinic temporarily shut down and patient care was moved online.



“My mindset didn’t change at all. It has always been, ‘How do I serve the people who I work with?’ I just had to adapt,” says Shawna.

At Darou Wellness, which she co-owns with Dr. Shreya Batra, ND (Class of 2019), patients come first. Virtual care was implemented as a service well before the onset of the pandemic, should patients require an online appointment. They are also never kept in the dark about clinic matters that may affect them, receiving a weekly communication in the form of an email newsletter. The clinic’s website and voicemail are updated regularly, and for those who enjoy a longer read, Shawna has maintained a blog for 10 years where she posts frequently about common health issues.

It is crucial to make patients feel comfortable, she says. Even so, like every other naturopathic clinic, there was a marked drop-off in first and follow-up visits for close to three months. To help alleviate the sagging numbers and keep patients engaged, Shawna implemented two new procedural changes: her

messaging shifted to reflect the new reality and she instituted complimentary COVID-19 check-ins.

“With virtual visits, you really get an idea of where people are at, so I just tried to provide as many resources as I could,” she says.

“In the beginning of the pandemic, there was a lot of anxiety and stress. After that, there was fatigue and depression. And then, there was talk of, ‘How do we reset after eating too much banana bread? How do we maintain fitness when the gyms are closed?’ I heard what my patients wanted, and I think that helped.”

As for the complimentary COVID-19 check-ins, Shawna explains that her patients’ health priorities shifted from “bigger picture” issues to more day-to-day functioning. To that end, she opened up her schedule so she could provide support to others on an as-needed basis. The check-ins are not meant to deal with immune system function or treatment for symptoms of COVID-19 (prohibited by Ontario’s naturopathic

#### SHAWNA’S SILVER LINING

My silver lining over the past eight months after a temporary shut-down and working from home has been a full appreciation of having a clinic to work at, and amazing colleagues to work with.

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“With virtual visits, you really get an idea of where people are at, so I just tried to provide as many resources as I could.”

Dr. Shawna Darou, ND (Class of 2003)

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regulatory body), but rather as a phone call for connection, emotional support and to provide resources where appropriate.

“I felt as though many people were struggling through challenges, such as losing jobs or benefits. I wanted to put myself out there if anyone needed help. I think I’m pretty good at communicating and I just maintained that throughout, regardless of how rocky it was on either end. When people feel heard, they tend to connect.”

Now that Darou Wellness has successfully reopened its doors (with strict sanitization, plexiglass and mask-wearing protocols in place), in-person visits are slowly creeping up in numbers. It will take some

time before they return to what Shawna considers “normal” levels, with most patients still preferring the safety and convenience of virtual visits, but the slowdown has given her plenty of time to reflect on the silver linings.

“You always have to adapt and pivot according to what’s going on in the world,” she says. “Last year was my busiest practice year ever, and then it changed on a dime. I’m grateful for what I’ve been able to maintain, being back in the clinic part-time and just seeing patients in-person once again.”

**Learn more about Shawna and Darou Wellness at:**  
[darouwellness.com](http://darouwellness.com)



The staff and practitioners of Darou Wellness.



# Lab Testing Series

## CALENDAR OF FUTURE EVENTS

**The science behind lab testing continues to evolve at a fast pace. In order to support our graduates, students and other health-care practitioners in diagnostic decision-making, CCNM has launched a high-quality, evidence-informed lab testing series to examine the value of laboratory testing in clinical practice.**

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# Fifteen Minutes with Owen Wiseman

On finishing his final year online and  
what the next chapter holds





**We catch up with the Class of 2020 graduate (and class valedictorian) to learn what drew him to naturopathic medicine, how he dealt with the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic six weeks shy of graduating, what he's been up to in the months following and his plans for the future.**

## **Q What led you to study naturopathic medicine?**

**A** - I had never heard of it [naturopathic medicine] ever in my life. I was studying for my MCATS and was working as a clinical researcher at our local children's hospital. Originally, I started working on a project focusing on how exercise can benefit pediatric epilepsy.

Unfortunately, my mom got diagnosed with Crohn's so I switched into the gastroenterology department. I worked for the chief of the department and because a lot of these kids had to be on a biologic, I witnessed a lot of conversations with families where they were told to take a specific medication and if they didn't have insurance, it was going to be very expensive. At that point, I started asking myself, "Am I okay doing this?"

I noticed that the younger GI physician worked a lot more with the dietitian on staff. They would trial the diet for a few months with the understanding that, "We'll see how they do and if they don't do well, then we'll go a medication

route with them." I kind of thought, well, there's something there. These kids are improving. It takes a lot longer and it takes diligence on their part, but they're still improving. I was quite upset leaving work one day and I went home and sat down with my parents and said I don't know if I can continue to proceed down my original route.

## **Q What did you do after making that realization?**

**A** - I started looking at different avenues connected to health care and I ended up finding Dr. Colleen McQuarrie, ND (Class of 2002). I reached out to ask if I could come in and shadow her for a day because I wanted to make sure that naturopathic medicine was something I could see myself doing every day, especially given the big investment of time and money. Colleen was phenomenal and I had a wonderful learning experience with her. I applied to CCNM and four years later, I'm still very happy with my decision.

## **Q Let's go back to earlier this year: your class is getting ready to finish the program and your clinic internships and then COVID hits. When you realized that this was going to be around for a while, what thoughts and feelings were running through your mind at that time?**

**A** - I hate feeling in limbo. I had a very structured approach to how everything was going to go on in my life: I was going to write my practical in the beginning of July, August is going to be my clinical science exam. I'll be licensed by September and then start my job. It didn't work out that way.

I had trouble articulating all of my feelings at first, but the best way I could summarize it was that it was a sense of mourning. I think what I was most mourning was not having closure on such a major chapter, the defining chapter really, of our academic experience. To be plucked out a month and a half ahead of finishing was really tough.

### **OWEN'S SILVER LINING**

A silver lining I rely on is always having access to forests and water. It's hard to feel stressed when the birds are chirping and the leaves crunch beneath your feet.

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“What other graduating class in the history of CCNM was going to come out with the experience of, ‘Hey, I did online care with my patients for a month and a half and it went really, really well.’”

Owen Wiseman (Class of 2020)

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I had such a positive clinical experience, so I was really upset not being able to say goodbye to these patients that I built these strong relationships with over the year. I was unable to give them my final best to help them improve. It was really hard to come to terms with that. In addition to patients, I wasn't able to say goodbye to a lot of my classmates and wish everyone well. It was very tough and very emotional.

**Q The RSNC's transition to telehealth care happened quite soon after the pandemic was announced. How would you describe that transition process?**

**A -** There's really no critique or criticism that you can give because this was new to everybody and every single sector had to adapt. Dr. (Lindsey) White, ND

(Class of 2012) and the rest of her team worked tirelessly. They turned everything around while also meeting the constantly shifting regulatory body guidelines and Health Canada guidelines. I thought that was incredibly impressive. Even if it took them longer than it did, so be it because I considered this more of an opportunity: what other graduating class in the history of CCNM was going to come out with the experience of, “Hey, I did online care with my patients for a month and a half and it went really, really well.” Now I will be more comfortable providing that option in private practice because, been there and done that. I know what it takes. I understand the prep time and how I can research beforehand. I understand the privacy laws a bit better, where I can meet patients virtually and how I can store things securely.



Left: Owen Wiseman, on the far right, with the Naturopathic Students' Association, 2019–2020. Right: Class of 2020 graduates Anna Grazyk, Maille Devlin and Owen Wiseman at the NSA Closing Ceremony in 2019.





## A MESSAGE TO THE CLASS OF 2020

Public health restrictions have prevented CCNM from hosting a convocation ceremony for the Class of 2020. In the interim, we asked Owen to send a message to his fellow classmates.

This is a letter to the family that grew together through the years at CCNM. Many of us started as strangers and through various firsts, we began to recognize ourselves as a more cohesive and equally diverse group of future primary care providers. If 2020 has highlighted anything, it is to celebrate all of the ways in which our class is dissimilar. Whether culturally, spiritually or emotionally, I can proudly say that I had the opportunity to apply lessons I took from each of you as the Class of 2020 buckled down to face the challenges of this year. I hope you take a moment to recognize your own resilience. You rose to meet the challenges and changes to a program that continues to evolve to meet the demands of health care. We were the first class to transition to virtual care, a herculean feat completed in seemingly no time (to us) by

Dr. White and her team. Many of us grew into a virtual presence that we may have been hesitant to try until our hands were forced by the global pandemic. In some part, perhaps the collective thought of, “I just need one more summer off like when I was a kid” that many of us felt coming towards the end of the program was exactly what the ND ordered.

Connecting with you these past months continues to make me incredibly proud to be a part of this family.

In health and happiness,

Class of 2020 valedictorian



## Q What have you been working on since graduating in May?

A - There was something I was working on before, but COVID really gave me the time to set it up. It's called Science and Nature. I think we can all inherently say that we feel better when we're outside either walking in nature, being on a beach or near the water. So the project was about answering the 'why' behind this. I had been collecting the research over the years and I loved prescribing vitamin 'N' in clinic, so I wanted to provide that information in an accessible format. It's also showed me how powerful greenery can be when you can correlate health

inequalities related to income with the amount of greenspace in a neighbourhood or influence mortality. You can find it on my website ([owenwiseman.com](http://owenwiseman.com)) and Instagram (@scienceandnatureofficial). It's something I'm very passionate about and I hope more practitioners can use the research-backed recommendations for their own patients.

What's been really neat is that the project has opened a lot of doors. I'm working with a few different magazines to contribute pieces. I've also connected with people in Africa, India and Sweden for collaborations, so it's been quite humbling to see the connections formed.

## Q What do you have planned after writing your licensing exams?

A - Things have really come full circle with me and Dr. McQuarrie. We've had ongoing conversations over the years since I first went to shadow her at her clinic. I think we both see something in each other that is really beneficial for the patients. We'll see where the future takes us. I have been extremely grateful for all the guidance she has provided over the years.

Learn more about Owen and his projects: [owenwiseman.com](http://owenwiseman.com) or [instagram@scienceandnatureofficial](https://www.instagram.com/scienceandnatureofficial)



Owen's nature-based science account on Instagram: @scienceandnatureofficial

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# Delivering Virtual Wellness

Through Well.ca, Dr. Laura Belus, ND (Class of 2015)  
is bringing naturopathic medicine to all of Ontario





Many Canadians are familiar with Well.ca, the online retailing behemoth headquartered in downtown Toronto. Selling health, personal care, green and baby products, the company has experienced exponential growth since it launched in 2008.



Continuing its commitment of bringing wellness to the masses, Well.ca customers all over Ontario, via its virtual services platform, can book online consultations with nearly every type of provider covering the gamut of complementary health services. The roster also includes Class of 2015 graduate Dr. Laura Belus, ND.

The collaboration with Well.ca developed over a couple of years. When Laura began building her practice five years ago, she sought out a collaborative and integrative environment in the Oakville and Burlington area of southern Ontario. Speaking at local health food stores and doing blood pressure checks in the community eventually got the word out, and she was introduced via email by a “friend of a friend” to the content creators at Well.ca.

“I sent a sample of my writing with a few topics which led to blog posts and eventual video segments,” she recalls. “I think it helped them realize the need to focus on more than just healthy products;

they wanted to help customers understand why they should consider adding a supplement to their routine for example, or what wellness really looks like. I think it has really opened up the path for virtual consultations later.”

One of the essential truths driven home by the pandemic is the sheer number of people who depend on NDs for their health and wellness concerns, or to simply act as a bridge with another health-care provider.

Well.ca is an excellent example of the increasing reliance and trust being placed on NDs. Laura was one of the first practitioners that the company brought onboard for their virtual health-care services, instantly creating reach throughout the province. Not only that, she is positioned as a primary care provider under their “Medicine & Health” banner, along with medical professionals such as doctors, pharmacists, physiotherapists and others.

#### LAURA'S SILVER LINING

Now, more than ever, is the time to invest in our well-being, our family's well-being and the well-being of our community.



**Well.ca has collaborated with Dr. Laura Belus, ND (Class of 2015) as an expert contributor to their blog WellBeing. Laura has a true passion for health optimization, and guides her readers to achieve their best health possible.**

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- Why heart health is something we should \*all\* care about
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Dr. Laura Belus, ND offers virtual care and writes ongoing blog posts for Well.ca.

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“Technology is working for us when it comes to telemedicine. I really think there are so many opportunities to reach people who don’t have an ND in their community.”

**Dr. Laura Belus, ND (Class of 2015)**

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Laura is a firm believer that NDs are an integral piece of the health-care puzzle and should play a role in every Canadian’s health journey. And with awareness of naturopathic medicine on the rise all across the country, now is the time for NDs to provide more virtual offerings.

“I feel that the ND toolkit is vast and it really is an asset for NDs to offer online care. There’s just so many benefits to keeping in close contact with patients, putting their health first, monitoring their wellness and not letting that fall by the wayside should public health concerns arise again.”

How an ND provides that type of care is really a personal choice. Laura’s point of view is that virtual medicine cannot replace physical in-office visits, but it certainly helps keep patients accountable and on track to reach their health goals. For example: self-care has become an important priority for many

during these last few months, with more attention being given to diet, lifestyle, mental and physical health. Because of this, NDs are in the ideal position to provide advice and at-home, cost-effective treatment options to alleviate the pandemic-related stresses that have cropped up for everyone.

“Technology is working for us when it comes to telemedicine. I really think there are so many opportunities to reach people who don’t have an ND in their community, are interested in your area of focus or resonated with something you blogged about. There’s so much power in developing that rapport and nurturing the connection.”

**Learn more about Well.ca’s online services at:**  
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**Learn more about Laura:**  
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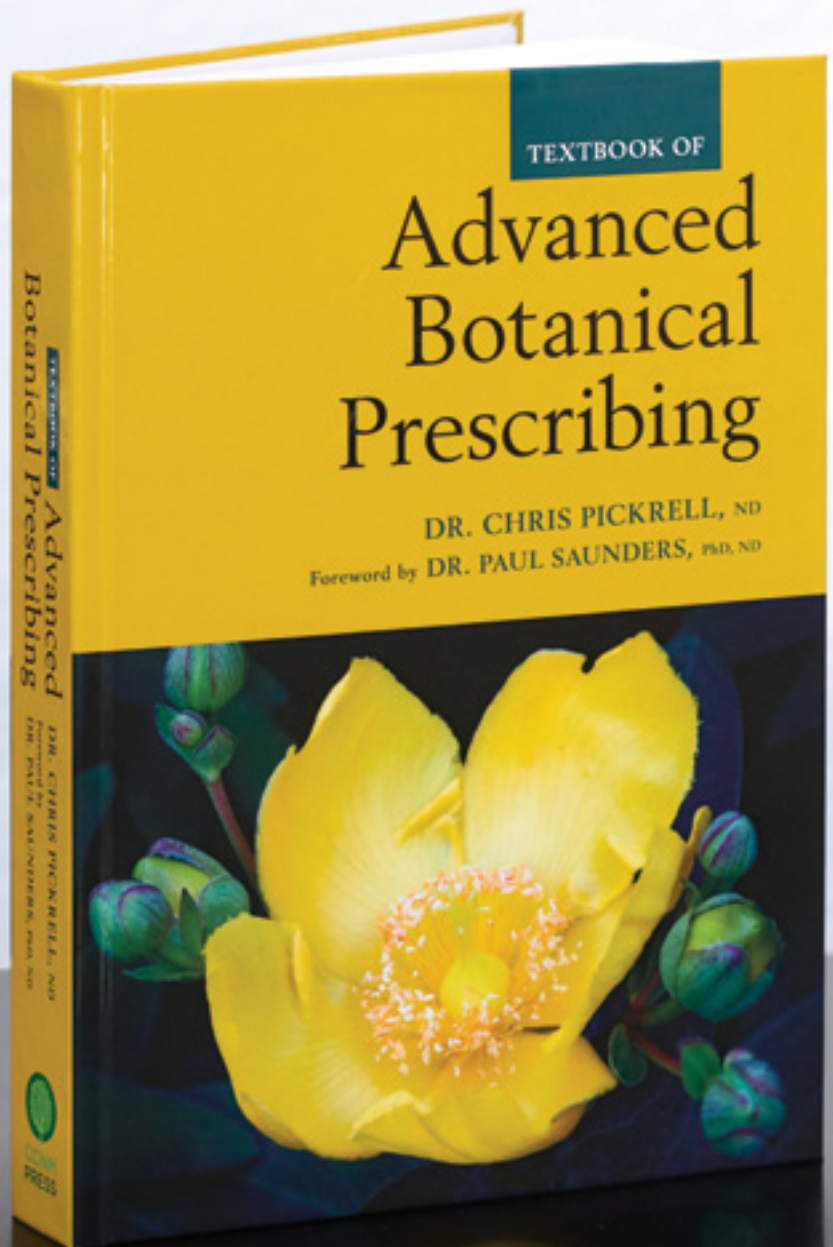
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*American Herb Association Quarterly* 33:1,  
Spring 2018 issue



# One Year Later: Dr. Catherine Multari, ND on Her First 12 Months in Practice

The Class of 2019 graduate on  
the scope of practice in B.C. and  
being an oncology resident





**It has been a tumultuous yet rewarding year for Dr. Catherine Multari, ND. She is currently completing a two-year residency at Port Moody Health, a preeminent health-care clinic in Metro Vancouver focusing on oncology and integrative medicine with a team consisting of NDs, one medical doctor, nurses, care coordinators and a few other health-care practitioners.**



When the province of British Columbia declared a state of emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic in March, all businesses (save for essential services) were closed. Port Moody Health, classified as an essential service, was exempted from the mandatory shutdown. (In May, non-essential services could open up once again under strict regulations.)

Catherine is back to full-time hours at the clinic but spent most of the closure working from home. She took this opportunity to see patients virtually, catch up on the didactic learning objectives required from her residency and write content for the clinic's website and newsletter.

"My first year of practice has definitely been a big learning curve," says Catherine. "A lot of people say, 'You only learn a fraction, if that, about naturopathic medicine in school versus what you learn in practice.' I feel like that's really true."

Though the past few months required Catherine to adjust her residency and day-to-day workload, her boss and mentor, Dr. Sharon Gurm, ND (Class of 2005) was always there to provide direction, support and guidance. Sharon, the founder and clinical director of Port Moody Health, recently oversaw a significant expansion of the clinic and is considered by many a trailblazer in integrative cancer care.

"There have been so many obstacles thrown our way even before the pandemic and Dr. Gurm has remained so steady in her approach and very calm," Catherine explains. "She always has a sense of optimism and remained positive and resilient through it all. So being able to see our leader and my residency director do that so gracefully puts things into perspective and makes even the hardest days doable and achievable."

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"[Dr. Gurm] always has a sense of optimism and remained positive and resilient through it all. So being able to see our leader and my residency director do that so gracefully puts things into perspective and makes even the hardest days doable and achievable."

**Dr. Catherine Multari, ND (Class of 2019)**

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“I feel very grateful for every day I work at Port Moody Health. I’m fortunate to have gotten this residency position and it makes all of the hard work at CCNM over my four years very worthwhile.”

Dr. Catherine Multari, ND (Class of 2019)

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Under Sharon’s supervision, the clinic is at the forefront of delivering innovative cancer treatments to patients. Catherine has been exposed to cutting-edge medical advances due to the wider scope of practice afforded to naturopathic practitioners in B.C. For example, Catherine can administer cancer care therapies – such as Loco-Regional Hyperthermia and photobiomodulation – that are not available to her counterparts elsewhere in Canada.

The residency offers a host of other benefits to the new graduate as well. She is able to shadow more experienced health-care providers and even completed external rotations, once per week, with a medical oncologist in North Vancouver during the first two months of the year. Finally, when she completes her residency, she will be eligible to write the American Board of Naturopathic Oncology board certification exam.

“After being only one year out of CCNM, I feel extremely competent in areas that I didn’t feel competent in when I started, such as IV insertion, IV therapy,

managing the flow of patient visits and handling different types of oncology and general practice cases. I feel a lot more comfortable practising, having seen a high volume of patients in my first year.”

With B.C. being a destination for integrative oncology, Catherine has no plans to leave the province. As a former competitive rower, she spent a lot of her summers on the west coast and is familiar with its lifestyle and scenery. (Port Moody Health itself is only a short drive away from the Pacific Ocean and the Rocky Mountains.)

While she was studying at CCNM, she remembers feeling the call to return to B.C. As it turns out, even through a pandemic, it was the best decision for her future growth as an ND.

“I feel very grateful for every day I work at Port Moody Health. I’m fortunate to have gotten this residency position and it makes all of the hard work at CCNM over my four years very worthwhile.”

**Learn more about  
Port Moody Health at:  
[portmoodyhealth.com](http://portmoodyhealth.com)**



Dr. Catherine Multari, ND at the College’s convocation ceremony in 2019. Left: receiving the NSA Naturopathic Honour Award from CCNM President and CEO Bob Bernhardt. Right: celebrating with family.

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# CCNM's Annual Career Fair Goes Virtual



On October 5, the College hosted its first ever online Career Fair. Check out the numbers:

- **Nearly 50 health-care clinics** from across Canada, professional associations, NHPs, and other naturopathic practitioners were represented
- **Close to 160 interns and Class of 2020 grads** registered for the event
- **About 88 per cent of exhibitors** planned to follow up with the grads they interviewed
- **Over 3/4 of exhibitors** would attend next year

Save the date for next year's Career Fair!  
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### CAREER FAIR SESSIONS

#### **Pivoting in a Shifting Landscape: New Approaches to Practice Management**

Participants: Dr. Anne Hussain, ND,  
Dr. Jodi Larry, ND and Dr. Michelle Peris, ND

*Learn about new approaches to practice management and how the traditional one-on-one, patient-practitioner visit might look like in the practice of the future.*

#### **The 5T's Toolkit - Moving from Transaction to Transformation**

Discussion leader: Dr. Meghan Walker, ND  
(Clinician Business Labs)

*Dr. Walker walks through non-traditional practice management, called the 5T's toolkit, which addresses the needs of a new breed of patients who seek sustainable, transformational health care.*

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# A Community Thrives During COVID-19

Dr. Michelle Peris, ND (Class of 2009) on the  
importance of maintaining connections





The Poppy Clinic’s bustling naturopathic practice in Oakville, Ontario, saw its business plummet by 70% during the first days of the pandemic. Unsettling to Dr. Michelle Peris, ND and her staff, some of whom experienced layoffs, the challenge was how to care for those living in fear and isolation when virtual medicine was a new concept.



The Wild Collective – a community group of like-minded women bonded together by sharing their stories and learning about women’s health topics.

The need to make a revolutionary transition to patient care turned into a quick pivot toward technology to help them continue to serve the community they focus on, namely women. The Poppy Clinic’s website describes itself as “a tribe for women who care about their health and want to support each other in their quest for abundance and happiness.”

This community included women in “The Wild Collective”; a community group of like-minded women bonded together by sharing their stories and learning about women’s health topics. What was usually a monthly in-person gathering turned into weekly Zoom calls.

Now the community grew beyond the borders of Oakville so women across Canada and in the U.S. could participate. Thirty-three additional naturopathic doctors use the program, providing The Poppy Clinic with licensing fee revenues.

The spring session of The Wild Collective sold out quickly and has also underpinned the clinic’s growth during the past six

months, almost back to pre-pandemic levels. This silver lining coincided with Michelle’s revelation that “virtual practice is here to stay as we see the value in treating people from the comfort of their own homes. The pandemic has given us time to make the necessary changes to a model of practice that wasn’t serving patients or clinicians well.”

The Poppy Clinic’s focus on integrative and preventative health, especially during this time of high stress, is valued by its clientele. “We have done a good job of maintaining connections virtually so we can serve more women,” says Michelle. “We haven’t lost our focus on the importance of connecting. Providing individuals space to have conversations is vital to the success of our programs.”

Michelle is also mindful of the link between self-care and delivering care to others. Having experienced burnout herself, she learned to nourish her mental health and well-being by finding ways to keep her brain healthy with coaching on positive mindsets. “When we have challenges, that’s when the

### MICHELLE’S SILVER LINING

Our current medical model needed disruption; the pandemic fast-tracked that we needed to innovate our offering. We focused more on our group health initiatives that benefit the community at large, especially at a time of physical distancing and I raised my rates of clinical practice to be able to afford the costly investment of a physical clinic. Better health care, more sustainable business model.



benefit of our investments in our health, come to light. It's important to find the supports you need to be able to stay creative, inspire, and have an impact through your work.”

### Career advice to students and new grads

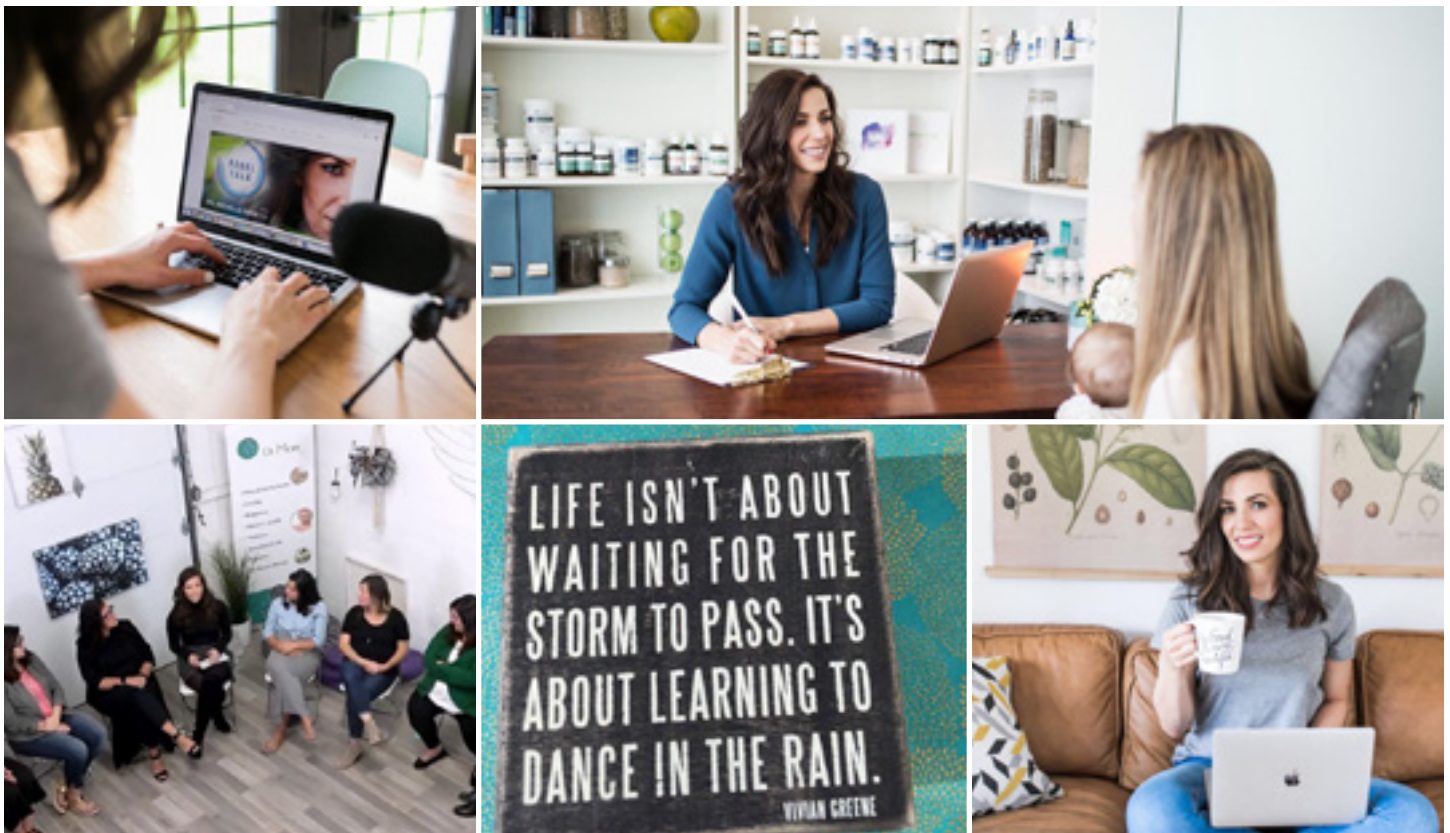
Michelle spoke at CCNM's Career Fair on October 5. Part of a panel discussion, “Pivoting in a Shifting Landscape: New Approaches to Practice Management,” moderated by Dr. Meghan Walker, ND, Michelle joined Dr. Jodi Larry, ND and Dr. Anne Hussain, ND to discuss this issue.

She talked to new graduates and interns about the opportunity to diversify their offerings to patients and radically shift health-care delivery. She urged graduates to look for innovative ways to inspire and authentically engage with their patients to grow a new practice.

“Group health is a viable way to provide consistent health care. The success we've had expanding The Wild Collective helped grow my practice while having a much greater impact by reaching more women than would otherwise have been possible,” she added.

“It may look like a challenging time – and it is in many ways. But I would urge new graduates to think beyond the traditional clinic model of providing patient care while maintaining a mindset of possibility. We are at a very different point in medicine. Not everyone wants health care delivered the way it was before the pandemic.”

**Learn more about Michelle and The Wild Collective:**  
[poppyclinic.com](http://poppyclinic.com)



Dr. Michelle Peris, ND at The Poppy Clinic.



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