

Trailblazing an Alternative Path to Family Medicine

Physician Profile: Tracy Brobyn, MD

Tracy Brobyn, MD had been practicing family medicine for more than two decades when she could no longer ignore the clinical elephant in the room. Like most family physicians, patients would come to her for a myriad of issues – many of which could be addressed with traditional medicine. However, a host of conditions, such as chronic pain, fatigue, atypical neuropathy and insomnia, seemed to remain a mystery even after exhausting the usual treatments. Frustrated by what she found to be a lack of effective treatment options, Dr. Brobyn decided to explore alternative methods of diagnosis and treatment.

“We consider chronic illness to be the result of multiple etiologies,” Dr. Brobyn says of her practice, The Chung Institute of Integrative Medicine in Moorestown. “Once you identify those etiologies, you can peel each one away, analogous to peeling away the layers of an onion, until you finally achieve resolution of the illness.”

Dr. Brobyn specializes in patients who are facing chronic illness that has failed the usual treatments and, as such, this includes patients of any age and often includes multiple organ systems. “I see a lot of patients who I was not able to heal in traditional family medicine: Those with pain syndromes, fatigue, unusual constitutional symptoms. They’ve exhausted conventional medicine when they come to us but without my background in family medicine, I wouldn’t even know where to begin.”

A board-certified family physician honored as a Fellow by the American Academy of Family Physicians, Dr. Brobyn now practices acupuncture, ozone therapy,

LDI (low dose immunotherapy), neural therapy and other alternative methods that aren’t necessarily evidence-based – and couldn’t be more pleased with the results she sees.

Her training in outside-the-box methods has helped Dr. Brobyn address maladies in a more holistic way. “It’s a whole different way of thinking. We believe in a five-stage model of illness where health relies on more than just the physical or biochemical,” the Mount Laurel resident says. “It also requires balance and replenishment of energy deficiency, addressing issues of psychological stress in one’s own life, dealing with generational stressors and, finally, the role of faith and belief in a higher power. We are able to address most of these issues in our current practice including not only biochemistry, but especially those disruptions that include energy and psychological stressors. This multifactorial approach is incredibly effective. Our patients are getting great results!”

Dr. Brobyn, who earned her medical degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1994, has completed training in prolotherapy at the University of Wisconsin’s Hackett Hemwell Foundation, and was trained by The American Academy of Anti-Aging in the use of bio-identical hormones, which help women combat the symptoms of menopause.

As a result of her practice’s approach to integrative medicine, Dr. Brobyn gets to know her patients, without feeling pressured to move quickly to the patient in the next exam room. She has the time to consider what is really going on with the patient. When it comes to the joy of practicing medicine, this has made all the difference in the world.

“My patients are like my friends. That’s why I went into family medicine – to take care of families,” she says. “It’s a huge gift. Even practicing alternative medicine, I often take care of multiple members of the same family.”

Dr. Brobyn has treated families in all types of communities – she served as a captain for three years with the U.S. Air



Force and was stationed as a family physician at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JBMDL) from 1997 to 2000. Many families at JBMDL were under stress, Dr. Brobyn explains; when active service members were deployed, the remaining family members were left to wait and worry at home, sometimes for as much as six months at a time.

“I saw the community really come together to support those left stateside, especially the now-effectively-single parents,” Dr. Brobyn says. “When you live on a base and your kid has an ear infection, you can’t always call your mom, your sister, or some other family member. It was interesting to deal with that as a physician – you had to be okay with the fact that the person bringing a sick kid in might not be the parent or even another family member.” Over time, Dr. Brobyn enmeshed herself in that close-knit community too, and found herself called upon to support a friend in need. “One of my close friends from the base was a physician and a single mom. After 9/11, we quickly established a power of attorney so that I would take her girls if she

was deployed to Afghanistan. Thankfully, it didn’t happen, but you had to be ready. The military taught me to think outside-of-the-box which is essential in making the leap to integrative medicine.”

And although Dr. Brobyn has always been willing to go the extra mile to provide support for her patients, she tries to remind herself that self-care is of the utmost importance for family physicians.

“Family medicine is a high-stress job,” she says. “Most family physicians are seeing four patients an hour, and the insurance companies are fighting them with every move they make. After you go through all the administrative requirements for insurance, you’re left with a short period of time with each patient.” She cites Pamela Wible, MD, founder of the Ideal Medical Care Movement, who lectures on the mental issues facing physicians, such as depression and burnout. “Dr. Wible says, ‘You can’t take care of people if you’re not allowed to take care of them.’ The clinical work environment of most physicians is in terrible disarray – especially that of the family doctor.”

Just as she may suggest patients do, Dr. Brobyn has identified an outlet. When not treating patients, Dr. Brobyn focuses her energy on exercise and singing. She has completed the Blue Cross Broad Street Run, the Walt Disney World half-marathon and full marathon, as well as the West Point Triathlon. She also sings for The Philly Pops orchestra as a member of the Philly Pops Festival Chorus.

“You have to have that something else,” Dr. Brobyn says. “Physicians are our own worst enemy – we think we have to take care of patients and nothing else. If we’re not, we must be doing something wrong. But you can’t be there for a patient if you aren’t there for yourself.”

Dr. Brobyn also credits her husband for supporting her in her work throughout her career but especially as she branched out into alternative medicine. “I could not have transformed my career this way without the backing of a supportive spouse,” she says. “It’s hard to learn new therapies in your 40s, let alone new ways of thinking. It’s fine to be scared, but do it anyway.” ▲

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