

5280

A SUPPLEMENT  
TO  
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MAGAZINE

# Health

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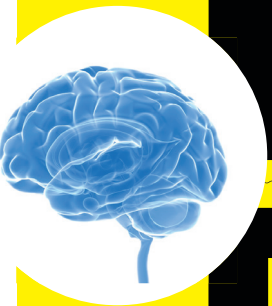
## DENVER'S

# BEST



## DOCTORS,

## DENTISTS



**THERE'S AN APP...**  
The Latest  
in Health-care  
Technology

**Colorado's Shocking  
Primary Care  
Doctor Shortage**  
BY LINDSEY B. KOEHLER

**SPORTS INJURIES**  
New Colorado  
Legislation Aims to  
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**Does Pot Really  
Have Medicinal  
Benefits?**  
BY SHARI CAUDRON

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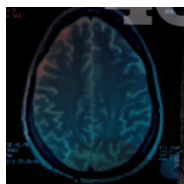
Cardiologist Dr. Bill Nelson → practiced at Denver's Saint Joseph Hospital for nearly 20 years. He retired in 2011—and that leaves our city, and its medical residents, missing his rare knowledge.

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A Colorado health-care technology company wants you to try iTriage. **By Chris Outcalt**

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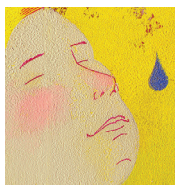


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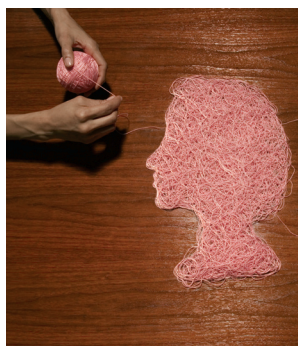
Medical marijuana is all the rage in Colorado—but does it actually have medicinal benefits? **By Shari Caudron**

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Emotional well-being is a state of health that many of us take for granted. But even the most stable psyche can wobble from time to time. Unfortunately, accessing mental health care can be a frustrating and confusing labyrinth. Here, we give you a basic map for navigating the maze.

**By Sarah Protzman Howlett**



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Drs. Jennifer McLean and Amy Brown practice in medically underserved areas of our state. It's not what most docs would call a choice position. They do it because they love it. But their jobs come with a fringe benefit that might make other would-be physicians reconsider the waning career of general practitioner.

**By Lindsey B. Koehler**

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: ISTOCKPHOTO; MARC PISCOTTY; COURTESY OF ITRIAGE; ISTOCKPHOTO; ILLINOIS; SCOTT BAKAL; ISTOCKPHOTO; DAVID CLIFFORD; FREDRIK BRODEN; ISTOCKPHOTO; ILLINOIS; SCOTT BAKAL; COURTESY OF AARON PARMET



## PREVENTIVE CARE

# Healing Hands

Using perioperative therapy for postoperative pain.

BY CHERYL MEYERS

*If you've ever considered cosmetic surgery*, it's the before-and-after pictures that draw you in. Hanging jowls, miraculously lifted. Flabby stomachs, gone. Small breasts, enlarged. Even if it's a nonelective surgery (like knee reconstruction), you think about the "after"—maybe hitting the slopes next winter—as you sign on the dotted line. No matter what type of procedure you might be undergoing, you rarely consider the postoperative phase—that swollen, puffy, bruised, scarred, anxious, and downright uncomfortable time immediately afterward. But the reality is, with every surgery comes a healthy dose of “trauma drama.” And in a noteworthy embrace of alternative-health modalities, a growing number of Denver surgeons are now prescribing a specific type of massage therapy to help alleviate this discomfort.

Of course, we don't mean these doctors send patients from the operating table straight to the day spa for a deep-tissue rubdown. Rather, they enlist the help of Ann Brooks and Kent Lemburg, two veteran Denver massage therapists who have developed an innovative system of massage called perioperative therapy, which assists patients through the entire recovery process associated with surgery.

At their practice, called Soulstice, all therapists have at least five years experience with therapy massage and all have observed surgeries to witness firsthand how the body is affected by everything from mastectomies to liposuction to orthopedic procedures. It's an experience that allows therapists to know intimately what the body needs to begin recovery—where scarring might develop, how to alleviate swelling, and methods for minimizing lumps and bumps.

“When the doctor sees you, it's a flash in time,” Lemburg says. “He or she makes sure that the surgery did what it was supposed to do and that your life is not in danger.” But once you're sent home, he explains, there is a gap in the treatment. Take, for instance, a mastectomy. The incision from the surgery makes it so that a patient is unable to fully extend her arms, explains Brooks. The typical patient will “guard” the surgery site, oftentimes refusing to move or touch

it. Two months later, a patient that guards an incision too much can develop something called frozen shoulder, where she is unable to move her arm. This, Brooks says, is extremely common but also entirely avoidable. “We're an extension of the doctor,” Brooks says. “The compassionate arm of the process. We empower people to get their bodies moving right again.”

Every patient's treatment is customized to meet his or her needs, but a typical schedule might entail: a presurgery treatment to prepare and relax the nervous system and tissue for the upcoming procedure; a postoperative lymphatic drainage massage that helps to alleviate swelling; later on, deeper therapy to work on scarring; and finally, a massage and passive range of motion session to work on muscle balance and posture. “I started incorporating perioperative therapy into my cosmetic cases a few years ago,” says Nick Slenkovich, a surgeon with the Colorado Plastic Surgery Center who sends his patients to Soulstice. “Getting the tissues and lymphatic fluids moving after surgery is critical to aid the healing process and prevent stiffness or hardening that may impact the results. I've found that patients who receive perioperative treatments recover faster and with fewer complications.”

## THERAPY ROUNDUP

*Three more ways to hasten recovery.*

>ACUPUNCTURE

According to a 2007 study published out of Duke University Medical Center, the use of acupuncture (the ancient Chinese practice of inserting needles into the body) before and during surgery reduces pain during surgery, minimizes the side effects of painkillers, and decreases the need for painkillers.

>REIKI

Reiki is an energy healing therapy created in Japan that is believed to lessen stress, reduce pain, and cure illness. Some surgeons, like Dr. Mehmet Oz of Oprah fame, opt to use the therapy during surgery to help patients relax.

>ACUPRESSURE

This ancient treatment involves touching pressure points on the body as a way to help the body “self cure.” A 2008 study by the University of California, Irvine, suggests that children who are administered acupressure while undergoing anesthesia for surgery experience less anxiety.