

# HIGH- & TECH HEALING TOUCH



*On the cutting edge of cardiac medicine, in a mainstream hospital, the best of East and West meet as Mimi Guarneri, M.D., and Rauni King, R.N., create a hospital for the future.*

BY STEPHEN KIESLING

As you read this, the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine in La Jolla, California, is plugging in a new machine that will let anyone take a Fantastic Voyage inside a human body — including your own. Climb into the new \$3-million scanner and within a few minutes the video screen will show a voyage through your heart — or anywhere else in your body — in real time. Onscreen it will look as though a microscopic submarine has been dropped into an artery, allowing you to scoot about at will, finding potential health problems before they find you.

Right now, I'm watching a demo video taken by a prototype machine, traveling through the arteries into a heart that has obviously undergone stress. The smooth, translucent arterial walls suddenly give way to the gleam of a metal tube, called a stent, that holds this artery open, eliminating the crushing pain of angina. Thanks to this new scanner, the patient can have the stent checked for blockage regularly with little more discomfort than driving in for an oil change. Better still, the new machine can peer into hearts that would otherwise never be screened — those with no known risk factors, and no outward sign that they are in fatally poor shape.

HANDS: CRISTINA PEDRAZZINI/PHOTO RESEARCHERS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JIM COIT

**Mimi Guarneri (right) and Rauni King at the beach near their center.**

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**Mimi (left) is a world-class heart specialist working with the latest scanning technology. Rauni (opposite) makes sure that every heart patient receives a healing touch treatment before surgery.**

**“You need to call your spirit back after a heart operation. I send difficult cases to Rauni to help them turn the corner.”**

The doctor projecting the video from her laptop computer is Erminia “Mimi” Guarneri, M.D., a founder and medical director of the Scripps Center who has done pioneering work with stents. About 750 people, many of them her patients, have gathered to hear her speak about her Healing Hearts program at Scripps and this miraculous new scanning machine. The audience’s gratitude is obvious. So is their excitement. They feel that they are taking part in the transformation of modern medicine.

Why? There’s always going to be a fancier new machine somewhere, but this clinic’s

goal is to seamlessly blend the high-tech scanner, world-class heart specialists such as Mimi, and a core group of “alternative” experts including acupuncturists, an herbal pharmacist, and healing touch practitioners who work specifically with the subtle energies so evident in this crowd. As I listen to Mimi’s talk, I’m practically glowing from a 90-minute healing touch session with the center’s co-founder and manager, Rauni King, R.N., a certified holistic nurse with 20 years’ experience in intensive care. As I lay on the massage table, Rauni ran her hands above my body. Without touching me or my telling her anything, she pinpointed the ache in my right hip and my acute tennis elbow, and sensed something odd in my right shoulder that might show up later. (Sure enough, it did.) Rauni balanced my aura and told me that six of my seven chakras were surprisingly open. I got up with a feeling I’ve never had in a Western medical center — absolutely radiant.

Is Guarneri threatened by the notion that her co-founder and head nurse may be better at scanning for certain diseases than her multimillion-dollar machine? “Not at all,” she says. In fact, she’s a level 4 healing touch practitioner herself. The clinic doesn’t count on healing touch for diagnoses. It’s for relaxation, reducing pain, and easing anxiety before surgery. But then she says something revolutionary for a classically trained heart specialist running a mainstream clinic: “You need to call your spirit back after a heart operation. I regularly send difficult cases to Rauni to help them turn the corner. Rauni works with them and they come back into their bodies energetically.”

### **Times, as they say, have changed**

The vision that led to the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine started 10 years ago

at the famed Esalen Institute near Big Sur, California. Rauni King wanted to spend a weekend there for the natural hot baths overlooking the Pacific Ocean. She also needed continuing education credits, so she signed up for training in healing touch. Rauni learned that in the West, healing touch dates back at least to Hippocrates, who noted that a force flows from many people's hands. In other cultures subtle energies have other names: *chi* or *qi* in China, *prana* in India, and *mana* in Polynesia. In 1988 the American Holistic Nurses Association asked their Nurse of the Year, Janet Mentgen, R.N., to develop a multi-level training program in energy healing for health care professionals. Mentgen's healing touch system, similar to Reiki, is based on Eastern models of energy fields (auras), energy centers (chakras), and energy tracts (meridians).

When Rauni went to Esalen, she had been an intensive care nurse for 14 years, yet it was on the long drive home that she suddenly understood her calling: spreading the practice of healing touch. "It opened a door for me. I knew that people in the ICU are not just in a physical crisis but in an emotional and spiritual crisis. Now, I knew I could help."

On Monday morning, when Rauni returned to the ICU, the surgeon remarked that she looked different somehow, that her energy was different. She asked him whether she could work on the patients. She feared ridicule, but he said, "Absolutely!" Since then, Rauni has completed the highest level of training in healing touch, and has taught at least 1,000 others in workshops at Scripps and in her native Finland.

About the same time that Rauni went to Esalen, Mimi Guarneri was in a transition of her own. She had grown up in New York in an extended family of doctors at a time when offices were at home, handholding was sometimes the only healing, and doctors knew their patients well enough to distin-



guish between angina and heartache. By the mid-nineties, however, Mimi's own medical practice sometimes made her feel less like a doctor than a "high-tech plumber."

"I'd been trained to sit and wait for someone to have their heart attack — not to prevent the heart attack," she said. She was seeing the same heart patients again and again, practically giving them frequent flyer miles for their many surgeries. The big problem for about 20 percent of her patients was that the lifesaving stents would trigger the heart's natural healing, clogging the stent. Mimi was doing innovative work using radiation to suppress this healing response and prevent clogging, yet she suspected that she was tackling the wrong problem. Suppressing natural healing, while necessary with stents, seemed like progress in the wrong direction.

She was coming to understand that the heart was not the mechanical pump she had learned about in medical school. The heart is the first organ to develop in the fetus — before the brain — and evidence suggests that the heart's electromagnetic pulse is what instigates the body's development.

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She also realized that half of all heart attacks are not predicted by risk factors such as smoking, obesity, or even bad genes: “A heart problem is often truly a problem of the heart — a spiritual problem of loneliness or sadness or stress that I didn’t have the tools in my toolbag to fix.”

Then came a memorable phone call to her office. One of her patients, a 54-year-old man, was asking for a stent support group. A stent support group? Mimi had laughed and the receptionist had politely brushed him off. But as Mimi walked down the hall, she stopped short. Her patient had been rushed to the hospital in an ambulance with crushing pain in his chest. She had saved his life with the stent. But she had not talked to him, and he had been sent home within a day. This poor man now had a piece of steel

in his heart and was wondering whether he could still support his family. Of course he needed a support group!

Mimi’s next move was to set up an Ornish heart disease prevention program at Scripps. Dean Ornish, M.D., was the first to demonstrate that blocked coronary arteries could be cleared without surgery by the heart’s natural healing ability using diet, exercise, yoga, meditation, and support groups. For the Ornish program, Mimi needed a nurse with extensive experience with heart patients, and so Rauni King came into her life. Shortly thereafter, Mimi came down with a viral infection that knocked her flat, and Rauni offered her a session of healing touch. An hour and a half later, says Mimi, “I got up, got dressed, and went back to work asking myself, ‘What happened?’” For

## Luxury Rx: Join This Healing Vacation



The atmosphere at the Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine feels like extended family. Patients and staff seem to know one another. They smile or hug in the hallways. They share news and gossip about the latest classes. And every November, Mimi and Rauni host a healing vacation in Hawaii that is open to all.

Called “Destination Health: Renewing Mind, Body and Soul,” this is a luxury vacation with an opportunity for personal renewal. The setting is the Princeville Resort, situated on a verdant bluff on the north shore of Kauai. Mornings are devoted to moments of personal nurturing before coming together for educational lectures, lunch, workshops and cultural activities.

This year’s vacation runs from Sunday, November 7 to Friday, November 12. For a full listing of speakers and workshops and information on prices and reservations, go to [scrippsintegrativemedicine.com](http://scrippsintegrativemedicine.com).



this heart specialist, healing suddenly had a new dimension.

Since then, Rauni has been Mimi's "pathfinder for new ideas." During their collaboration, the Ornish program expanded into the Center for Integrative Medicine, launched in 1999 with a large grant from the Medtronic Foundation. The center's staff are at home in both Eastern and Western medicine. The acupuncturist is also a physician, a biofeedback instructor is a cardiac nurse, and almost everyone has at least some healing touch training to ensure that every heart surgery patient receives a treatment.

One of the center's goals is to make every treatment "evidence based," yet Mimi freely admits that we don't know how energy healing works. Recently, however, functional MRIs have become able to measure "biofields," the energy fields that may be manipulated through healing touch. She also cites a growing body of laboratory research showing how the heart's rhythms affect those of others: "Researchers have now captured such connections using an EKG."

The larger goal of the center is to create a major mainstream clinic with the gentle feel of Mimi's uncle's home office — and that, surprisingly, is why they needed the fancy new scanning machine. Not only is it a marvelous advance in preventive medicine, but it can be lucrative. The plan is for the machine — funded by a grant — to pay for all the time-consuming person-to-person healing practices that don't pay for themselves in a modern clinical setting. If this business model succeeds, the combination of high-tech and healing touch could revolutionize health care.

### **Déjà vu all over again**

My visit to the Center for Integrative Medicine gave me a sense of déjà vu. I had in fact been there before, in the late 1980s, when the sharp-angled white stucco building opened as a high-tech fitness center complete with a rubberized asphalt track and indoor bas-

ketball court. I was an Olympic rower, often writing for *Sports Illustrated*, and the enthusiastic new fitness director led me around. He seemed to believe, as perhaps I did, that all the fancy sports training and testing equipment would make us real Olympians — as in immortal.

Now, as Mimi gave me a tour, she joked that the architects who designed the original fitness center had apparently never visited the site — "How else could they have put the blank walls of the basketball court facing the ocean and the big windows of the fitness rooms facing the parking lot?" She noted the wide exterior concrete stairs. "I've been told that the feng shui of these stairs is terrible. All the qi gets dumped out toward the ocean." She grins. "I don't know what I think about feng shui, but I have come to understand that place matters. This complex is about to be remodeled, partly for space for the new scanner, but the real improvements will be new yoga studios with windows facing the ocean, the labyrinth and walking path, and the gardens with medicinal plants. This place is going to be beautiful!"

Mimi hurried off to meet with a patient, and I sat down on the concrete steps to write some notes. The fog was lifting and I could see the ocean. The gift of the great fitness boom of the eighties was a pure and perhaps blind enthusiasm for the experience of vitality. The fitness center here was a grand emblem of its time, as is this new center in the present. It's high-tech, and it will be beautiful. But what really matters?

The answer, it seemed to me, was in the energy here. In a bustling state-of-the-art medical facility filled with fancy machines, Mimi and Rauni and their band of healers have imbued the place with kindness. Let's hope it's catching. ❖

Stephen Kiesling is editor of *Spirituality & Health* and coach of the Southern Oregon University crew in Ashland, Oregon.

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## Leading the Change

# Six Visions for the Future of Medicine

When the “Most Trusted Man in America” announces that the U.S. health care system is at a point where “systems change is what’s required,” attention must be paid. The legendary newsman Walter Cronkite spoke those words last November to hundreds of leading lights in health care and philanthropy assembled in New York City. In the audience were six physicians, finalists for the first annual \$100,000 Bravewell Leadership Award for Integrative Medicine.

The Award’s sponsor, the Philanthropic Collaborative for Integrative Medicine ([pcintegrativemedicine.org](http://pcintegrativemedicine.org)), defines the new practice as “the skillful blending of the best conventional care with evidence-based complementary/alternative therapeutic interventions that work together in the healing of the whole person — body, mind, and spirit.” For the philanthropists who funded the award, such as breast cancer

survivor Penny George, the mission began with a personal journey into the U.S. health care system where they felt something important was missing. That “something” includes a better understanding of non-Western therapies. But the heart of the matter is the understanding that a patient is “a person with a disease, not a disease to be cured.”

For the award winner, Ralph Snyderman, M.D., it’s about “combining the power of the caring interaction with the power of science.” Snyderman was recognized for his leadership in building the Duke Center for Integrative Medicine, which has become a national model. He will use the award money to improve prevention of and early intervention for chronic diseases through integrative medicine.

“We are at the leading edge of a movement,” said Snyderman. “This award is really a call to responsibility.”

**“What is your vision of integrative medicine over the next 10 years?”**  
**The Bravewell Award finalists respond.**

### **Erminia “Mimi” Guarneri, M.D.**

*Scripps Center for Integrative Medicine (see “High-Tech and Healing-Touch,” page 40).*

We are not simply looking for more tools to place in our already bulging toolbox. Rather, I envision us recognizing that there are many paths to healing, that the body has healing abilities, and that the environment plays a vital role in assisting the natural healing process.



### **Rachel Remen, M.D.**

*University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine. Best-selling author of *Kitchen Table Wisdom and My Grandfather's Blessings*, and creator of *The Healer's Art*, a course now taught at 17 major medical schools.*

In 2014, integrative medicine will be obsolete. The principles, perspectives, and approaches that now distinguish it from allopathic medicine will be integral to the practice and teaching of medicine. The words “professional” and “professionalism” will have been redefined to encompass

dimensions of the individual that are not only intellectual but holistic, that include the intuition, the heart, and the spirit.

In 2014, medical training will recognize that people cannot practice holistically unless they are educated in ways that do not diminish their intellectual openness or devalue the power and importance of the heart, the intuition, or the soul.

In 2014, medical education will fully support the service aspirations of students and their pursuit of meaning as well as knowledge, and will encourage professionals to practice their highest values.

## **Woodson Merrell, M.D.**

*The Continuum Center for Health and Healing of Beth Israel Medical Center, the largest and most comprehensive academic integrative medicine practice in the country.*

All levels of medical education should incorporate the best evidence available — whether from conventional medicine, indigenous practices, or the newer complementary and alternative practices. And once



the student has graduated, his or her knowledge of integrative medicine needs to be supported experientially in the residency training program.

## **Kathi Kemper, M.D.**

*Department of Pediatrics, Wake Forest University Health Sciences and Harvard Medical School, and author of The Holistic Pediatrician.*

We are inventing the future. Our evolution from “unconventional” to “alternative and complementary” to “integrative” reflects larger cultural changes led by an educated, empowered public.

Intuition and being a compassionate presence of peace will be as highly valued as reciting a database of memorized facts. Physicians will recognize and respect the beauty of gifts offered by other kinds of healers. Pain treatment services will routinely include psychologists, acupuncturists, massage therapists, and bio-energetic healers. Pre-operative services will be mindful of nutrition, dietary supplements, mind-body practice, and social and spiritual support to promote healing.

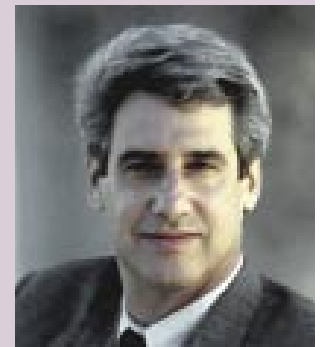
Hospitals and clinics will become healing environments as well as technical centers for disease management. We will move prevention and health promotion from last place to first.



## **Brian Berman, M.D.**

*University of Maryland School of Medicine Center for Integrative Medicine.*

Just over 10 years ago, not long after I started the integrative medicine center, I met a friend's father, then the dean of one of New York's medical schools. When he heard what I was trying to do, he spoke with the directness he is respected for: It was “a load of hogwash.” I was greatly surprised, therefore, to hear an address he gave recently, entitled “Complementary and Integrative Medicine.” In his straightforward manner, he was calling on his colleagues to take an active role and see what this had to offer to improve medicine. We have come a long way.



## **Ralph Snyderman, M.D.**

*Chancellor for Health Affairs of the Duke University Health System and recipient of the inaugural Bravewell Award for Leadership.*

I firmly believe that we now have the capacity to improve every individual's health and well-being while avoiding unnecessary chronic disease. We must blend the very best in scientific and technological medical approaches with a humanist, holistic understanding of people's needs, and openness to the fact that science and technology cannot address all our health problems. The current dissatisfaction with our health care system, along with its potential to deliver far more than it does, creates the opportunity to catalyze a transformation in health care. I believe that integrative medicine is central to this transformation.

