

Raising the Bar

Drip Bar Health Center Brings Big Ideas to Little Rhody

by Wendy Lewis

A man reclines peacefully, stretched out on a lounge chair. A woman lies close by on another chair, holding his hand. Their wide, contented smiles are the kind you'd expect of vacationers lying poolside at an upscale resort. But the man isn't drinking a tropical cocktail; he's receiving a therapeutic IV infusion in the drip bar at Intellectual Medicine 120, in Warwick.

Formerly the Petteruti Center for Life Extension, the facility was recently renamed to better capture its expanded breadth of services and the philosophy of its founder, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Stephen Petteruti. Traditional health care, he says, has "taken the intellect out of medicine. I want to put it back in." Petteruti, a primary care physician and doctor of osteopathic medicine, is also board-certified in medical weight loss, anti-aging and regenerative medicine. Though Petteruti has received some criticism for his "unconventional ideas," it doesn't dampen his enthusiasm for medicine and passion for helping patients lead healthier, happier, longer lives.

"There's a problem with health care right now," he says. Doctors must adhere to established standards of care. Though those standards were created to help ensure quality, he says, those standards often limit the treatment options physicians can offer their patients. "The 'standard of care' has come to mean, 'doing what everybody else is doing,'" he says, "and if you're doing that, you're never going to move forward. I think we need to break out of the standards that are currently established. And if I have to catch a couple of arrows, I'm okay if it helps that happen."

Intellectual Medicine 120 refers to Petteruti's approach of combining thought, science and rational think-



ing with medicine, and the Hayflick limit, a concept in cellular science that suggests the possibility of a 120-year lifespan. "Our goal," he says, "is to create a platform of delivering health that's entirely different from the conventional way of thinking."

The center's rebranding also reflects Petteruti's desire to create a platform through which he and other doctors and nurse practitioners can collaborate and track results. "I can only go so far," he says. "There is legitimacy and value in some of these unconventional treatments, and we need to have more centers in the country like ours so others can also start using the knowledge with their patients." Petteruti says doctors from Massachusetts and Pennsylvania have already come to the center for training.

At the heart of the treatment center is the drip bar, where patients receive IV drip treatments. Liquid nutrients are stored in a medical-grade refrigeration unit and a sterile IV compounding hood guards against germs and helps preserve the center's zero-infection rate. IV drips may be administered as part of the comprehensive treatment plan created for each patient. The infusions,

Petturuti says, have helped patients with varied needs such as cancer support and chelation therapy and as part of the center's anti-aging, hormone therapy and weight loss programs.

Two years ago, Petturuti decided to officially break free from traditional medicine—a bold move that would change his practice into a cash-based one that does not accept insurance. "It was a huge leap of faith," he says, "but we did it because we needed freedom to practice medicine in a manner that we knew would help our patients more."

Among the benefits of the new structure is the freedom to spend more time with each patient. "If you've been to the doctor lately, you know what I'm talking about," Petturuti says. "They're looking at the computer more than they're looking at you." It's not unusual for Petturuti to spend an hour with a patient to discuss treatment options or articles patients have brought in, or to text patients directly to answer their questions.

Shannon Petturuti, nurse practitioner and Petturuti's wife, says that although the center embraces the latest ideas and modern technology, the social model is reminiscent of community doctors of centuries past. "It's smaller," she says. "We know every patient and everything about them. It's more like how medicine and patient care is supposed to be."

Petturuti is passionate about exploring ways to cure what he feels are the biggest health epidemics of today—heart disease, cancer, aging, dementia and obesity. "The body has an incredible ability to heal itself, and I've witnessed that on many occasions. We want to get doctors curious and we're hoping to prove that they can still make a living by doing the right thing." Through Intellectual Medicine 120, he hopes to join with others in the medical community to help prevent and reverse disease and illness.

Intellectual Medicine 120 is located at 250 Centerville Rd., Bldg E, in Warwick. Listen to Dr. Petteruti Saturdays from 8-9 a.m. on WPRO 99.7 FM and 630 AM. For more information, visit im-120.com. See ad on page 13.

Wendy Lewis is a frequent contributor to Natural Awakenings. Connect at WordsmithWendy@yahoo.com.