

SUSTAINABLE HEATH

As we move into a future less dependent on costly fossil fuels, what will happen to our healthcare? We take a look at the situation in 2030 through the eyes of Transition's Rob Hopkins and ask some of the healthcare experts around the South West for their visions of an ideal future.



Rob Hopkins, permaculturalist
Founder of the 'Transition Movement'
Totnes

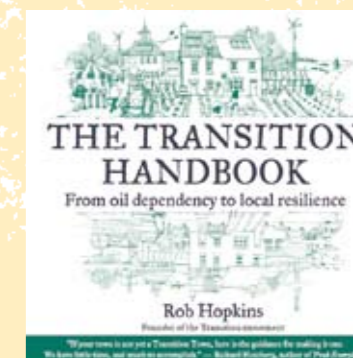
The Year is 2030

Today our idea of health – how to create and maintain it – has changed markedly from that of twenty years ago. The Health Service had to rethink itself as the oil price made many of its practices and approaches unaffordable, and it faced the very real threat of collapsing completely. The closure of local hospitals in favour of centralised ones – so rampant twenty years ago – has been reversed, and local healthcare centres are now not just about treating illness but promoting

health in many diverse ways. They have forged partnerships with local schools, promoting food growing and familiarising young people with the whole food cycle from seed to salad. The wellbeing of the individual is seen as inseparable from the wellbeing of the community. Human biology is now a compulsory school subject, and has expanded to include nutrition and basic herbalism.

About half of the medicines prescribed by doctors are now locally sourced, with local farmers growing certain key medicinal plants which are processed in local laboratories. Local chemists also now make over 50% of the medicines they

sell on the premises. Doctors are able to prescribe a range of complementary treatments, as well as involvement in local community gardens, and access to affordable good food. The growth in access to meaningful work, the rebuilding of social cohesion and an emerging common sense of purpose, has resulted in fewer stress related illnesses and cases of depression. Conventional and complementary practitioners are seen very much as two sides of the same coin, and the concept of promoting health rather than just treating disease has led to a range of innovative measures.



From 'The Transition Handbook', Green Books 2008
www.greenbooks.co.uk



Mani Norland
The School of Homeopathy
Uffculme, Devon

If we are moving to a time when we need to become more sustainable, make better

use of our resources and support our communities in a more local way, then I think complementary medicine and especially homeopathy, has a lot to offer. Almost all complementary therapies are less expensive than conventional drugs and they can help with many things that drugs aren't so good for such as mental and emotional illness, depression and stress. The beauty is that they have stayed close to their roots – developing slowly through the people and the earth over thousands of years of use and development. Successful trial after trial in the real world with real people is testament to their healing abilities.

Homeopathy is an energetic medicine which millions of people testify to, but its science is still waiting to be discovered. The basic principles are easy to grasp and most

people could learn to treat simple first aid situations without extensive training. Even its remedies are easy to make up. Most come from nature – plants, animals and minerals – things that are found readily here in the UK. In a doomsday scenario it would be possible to create remedies from what's in your own garden for acute things like vomiting, diarrhea, coughs, colds, headaches and fevers – but obviously it's far easier – and safer! – to buy a homeopathic first aid kit and do a course.

For in-depth chronic prescribing, which is about understanding the underlying and maintaining cause for a person's disease, you require three to four years training. So if we were looking for local health solutions then we would definitely want a trained person within each community. It's really about giving people the knowledge to look after their own health. Healthy people are happy people – there's nothing of greater value than your health.

For more info on homeopathic first aid course and long-term training at the School of Homeopathy see www.homeopathyschool.com; 0800 0439349.



Dr Michael Dixon,
GP
Culm Valley
Centre for
Integrated
Health
Devon

My vision of an ideal future is

that patients will be able to choose, where appropriate, between a conventional or a complementary approach or both. Complementary therapies at our practice now include osteopathy, Alexander technique, homeopathy, herbalism, acupuncture and a range of mind body therapies. We have a fairly long tradition of referring to complementary practitioners having had two healers working at the practice now for fifteen years – all partners suggest that patients should see complementary practitioners.

My vision is also that the NHS should pay for complementary approaches, where they have been shown to be cost-effective, and thus make them available to all. Funding is by private means at present although some of the practitioners offer fairly reduced

rates. Our aim here is to do some pragmatic service-based research and show that complementary treatment for some conditions is cost-effective when compared to conventional treatment – especially in areas where conventional medicine is less good such as back pain, long-term tiredness, frequent infections and headaches. Commissioners should focus their decisions on pragmatic research such as this rather than on large population studies using limited research methodology (such as double-blind placebo controlled trials).

It is also a vision that Centres like our own offer a fully integrated service at the same time as a fully integrated approach towards personal health, community health and helping people to look after themselves and each other. It is a future that respects individuals and relationships every bit as much as it currently respects diseases infecting individual parts of the body.

www.collegesurgery.org.uk;
 01884 831300



Holly Mash,
Holistic Vet,
Bristol

You have to be a regular vet before you can specialise in complementary treatments for animals. There will

always be broken bones and accidents – things that need conventional treatment – but everything has its place and I believe in treating the whole patient rather than just the symptoms. I use homeopathy and acupuncture treatments for my patients to treat a range of conditions from fear of fireworks to arthritis and vomiting. I tend to see long-standing chronic conditions where owners have come to the end of the road with conventional medicine - things like skin conditions, allergies, behavioural problems.

My vision for the future would be that all vets use homeopathy as a first line treatment for everyday problems in animals whenever appropriate. This way our pets would be healthier and may be less likely to suffer from so many chronic issues. We would also have more of our pets on a

home-cooked and natural diet rather than the processed foods they are mostly now on. I would also like to see that people are given more freedom and confidence to look after their pets in the way they would like – so that both pet and owner can benefit from a holistic approach to health.

The farm is a great place for using homeopathy too. Conventional vet medicines are very expensive whereas homeopathic remedies are very cheap – you can put a couple of drops of tincture in a water trough for the whole herd. It's also a more proactive approach because it's more about boosting general health than treating problems when they arise. This is particularly important for organic farmers who have to try and minimise their use of medicines so as not to compromise the organic status of their produce. There's a short course called Homeopathy at the Welly Level (HAWL) for farmers to learn how to use a number of remedies in a range of situations.

www.hollymashvet.com;
 0787 5767403

www.hawl.co.uk – for courses in September, October, November

