

Though three area patient experiences are quite dissimilar, they share a common connection: Christine Hayes Physical Therapy and The Integrated Healing Center. Pictured are Mary Lewis, Jim Dannaker, and Shawn Kelly.



# PATIENTS PRAISE The Integrated Healing Center

BY SUSAN I. SHIBER

Pain presents its excruciating self in ways as profuse as stars in a clear midnight sky. Each circumstance is unique, varying in diagnosis, level of discomfort, method of treatment, and ultimate outcome. Though three area patient experiences are quite dissimilar, they share a common connection: Christine Hayes Physical Therapy and The Integrated Healing Center. Here are their stories.

## BACK IN THE GAME

Mary Lewis, a serious golfer, is able to play thanks to an integrated therapy approach, which also helped relieve stress.

Lewis, who enjoyed school sports as a child, never considered golf until 18 years ago. Her husband Joe, a lifelong player, introduced her to the game, which she now loves. Lewis first encountered Christine Hayes Physical Therapy when a herniated disc in her neck curtailed daily activities. Treatment was successful, but she put golf

on hold until five years ago when the couple's children were in college.

Last year, tendonitis in her elbow and shoulder began to impede Lewis' game. She again visited Hayes and discovered The Integrated Healing Center. "Chris is my go-to for physical therapy," notes Lewis. "Her standards are exemplary, and she has performed wonders for me."

Hayes discovered interconnected pain patterns in the neck, shoulders, and elbow. She suggested for Lewis to consult with Doug Cheng, DPT, in order to eliminate pain and restore strength and range of motion. To ensure complete healing and prevent future injuries, Cheng provided a functional movement assessment and targeted exercise to focus on dysfunctional movement patterns throughout the body. "I learned during months of physical therapy that *mommy tension* shows up in the neck and shoulders," points out Lewis. "Everything tightens up. When I experience any type of stress, my whole back becomes

*crunchy*. Tightness in one area travels and affects other parts of the body."

To alleviate these problems, Lewis began to see Dr. Nancy McCarel, a licensed psychologist and board-certified biofeedback practitioner. Complementing physical therapy with stress management, breathing techniques, and meditation, Lewis began to feel less reaction from stressful triggers. "Dr. McCarel helped me learn to step back and observe the triggers causing internal negative reactions. Over time, the brain and body become wired a certain way in response to tension. Some people experience queasiness, others tightness, as I do. Through retraining and mindfulness gained from meditation, I achieved results, which made physical therapy more productive.

"This combination of therapies prepared me to resume golf. Now I'm playing two times a week and practicing between games. I played my first tournament in May, thanks to Christine Hayes Physical Therapy and The Integrated Healing Center. They have made a wonderful difference in all parts of my life."



Mary Lewis, a serious golfer, is able to play thanks to an integrated therapy approach, which also helped relieve stress.

*Pictured in these photos with Mary are some members of her therapy team: Doug Cheng, DPT; and Dr. Nancy McCarel, a licensed psychologist and board-certified biofeedback practitioner.*

## The Integrated Healing Center and its team and specialties are:

**Physical Therapy** – Christine Hayes, PT, PC

**Barbara Brennan Healing Therapy** – Michele Mallon, BHSP

**Acupuncture** – Talia Malka, LAc, RAc

**Psychology** – Nancy McCarel, PhD, BCB, BCN, and Associates

**Craniosacral Therapy** – Brigid Meagher, LMT

**Functional Movement & Yoga** – Christine Sturgis, PTA, FMS Certified

**Massage** – Sara Fortunato, LMT, PTA, CLT-UE; Brigid Meagher, LMT; and Bettina Becker, LMT

**Nutrition/Yoga** – Sandra Gargus, CHHC

**Pilates** – Jennifer Bergh and Bettina Becker, LMT



**A MIX OF MODALITIES**

Shawn Kelly, a multiple sclerosis patient, was unable to walk without a cane and couldn't always communicate words to describe thoughts. There was a major change after integrated therapies were applied.

Kelly relates to Lewis' experience. She initially went to Hayes for physical therapy after knee surgery and relied on her for various muscle issues in subsequent years. In 2004, Kelly was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. "I was an avid runner and cyclist," she says, "and one day about three miles into a five-mile loop, my left foot started slipping. I was also unnaturally tired. I immediately made an appointment with a neurologist and was diagnosed at once. Treatment progressed and during the first year I was fine."

Kelly's health began to deteriorate. She needed a cane to walk, had a noticeable foot drop, and frequently tripped. Her balance was poor, her gait unstable. She couldn't walk without a brace or other assistive device. Both arms were afflicted, as well, and speaking coherently became a problem.

She returned to Hayes for a solution and began physical therapy with Kate Biles, DPT, a neuro and pelvic floor specialist. Biles applied functional movement and various soft tissue techniques to ease tight muscles. Kelly experienced results, but realized physical therapy could only take her so far in the journey to recovery. Hayes recommended Talia Malka, who practices acupuncture in The Integrated Healing Center. "I was eager to try alternative medicine while continuing with Western modalities,"

Shawn Kelly, a multiple sclerosis patient, was unable to walk without a cane and couldn't always communicate words to describe thoughts. There was a major change after integrated therapies were applied.

*Pictured in these photos with Shawn are some members of her therapy team: Kate Biles, DPT (pictured right), a neuro and pelvic floor specialist; and Talia Malka (pictured above), who practices acupuncture.*



explains Kelly. "I see Talia every day for acupuncture and moxibustion, a traditional Chinese therapy that dates back thousands of years. Treatment involves the burning of mugwort herbs, which increases blood flow and stimulates the heat shock protein in damaged nerves allowing them to re-fire. I'm walking a lot better now and don't need to rely on a cane all the time."

Malka also introduced Kelly to a healthy diet. She advised her to eliminate processed food and sugar from her diet. Kelly emphasizes, however, the most significant benefit in her treatment is her ability to communicate. "The fact that I can be interviewed is tremendous. Previously I had trouble finding words. You asked me to slow down a couple times and that thrills me."



Jim Dannaker is finally finding relief through integrated therapy. His arduous path to recovery is possible with the help of multiple therapists.

*Pictured in these photos with Jim are some members of his therapy team: Brigid Meagher, LMT; Talia Malka, LAc, RAc; and Christine Hayes, PT, PC.*



*Christine Hayes and Talia Malka*

**Integrated medicine is:**

- An integrated medical approach that supports and empowers patients by identifying potential healing obstacles.
- A partnership between the patient and the healing practitioner in the healing process.
- A blend of conventional healing methods and alternative methods to facilitate the body's innate healing response.
- A consideration of all factors influencing health, wellness, and disease, including mind, body, and spirit.

Healing Center, Dannaker is grateful beyond words for the extraordinary care he receives. "I don't think you will find therapists like this anywhere else. Being located under one roof is significant."

As a construction supervisor for CPS Railway Services, a family business founded by his grandfather, Dannaker is very careful to avoid accidents, but sometimes unpredictable mishaps occur. In the late 1990s, he was thrown 10 feet, smashing onto the ground. As he was rushed to the hospital, there was no feeling in his legs. He recovered and returned to work in two weeks, but admits nothing was ever the same.

A strong and determined optimist, Dannaker endured intermittent throbbing pain caused by herniated discs. Several years after the fall, a microdiscectomy was performed to ease compression. In three months, he was back on the job. Despite surgery, he continued to have problems with nerve pain. Epidural and trigger injections didn't help.

Kelly's neurologist is astounded by her improvement. Although he informed her she could seek any alternative treatment she wished, he was skeptical. Today, the physician is a firm believer in Malka's approach and refers other patients to The Integrated Healing Center.

**MIRACULOUS RESULTS**

Jim Dannaker, a complex pain patient, is finally finding relief through integrated therapy. His arduous path to recovery is possible with the help of multiple therapists.

Another ardent devotee of Christine Hayes Physical Therapy and The Integrated

He had two lumbar discectomies, which were merely quick fixes. When another setback brought him to his knees, a double fusion was recommended. "During recovery, I was in a brace from my armpits to the top of my thighs. My mother brought me food, and I crawled on hands and knees to the bathroom. Three months later, I was finally out of the brace, and a friend took me to lunch. On the way to the restaurant, a woman driving and talking on her cellphone hit us. Although, the collision didn't affect the surgery, I was back on a body board."

Nine months later, Dannaker returned to work and the fitness center, a passion he had sorely missed. He was delighted to lift weights again. "I was kicking butt at the gym," he proclaims with gusto. "Suddenly, a giant decorative mirror fell on me! Fortunately, the fusion wasn't distressed and after some recovery time, I went back to CPS."

All was rosy in Dannaker's world until two years ago when he lifted his father, a Parkinson's disease patient, to the bed. "Pop! It happened again," he exclaims. "I could barely walk and if you touched me, I curled up like a baby. This time the pain was so severe, my boss (also my uncle) forbid me to come back to work. Uncle Clyde recommended Christine Hayes Physical Therapy. He said: *She's the best.* He's absolutely right."

"Jim practically crawled into my office in extreme pain," says Hayes. "He suffered from the most severe anguish I have seen in 29 years of practice; his sacrum was fused to his pelvis, which is extremely rare. His entire nervous system was on fire. I gently supported Jim with trigger point release work while Talia performed acupuncture to calm his nervous system and manage the muscle spasms. This is an example of how we can work together, literally, on a patient. In the beginning of Jim's treatment protocol it took two practitioners to stabilize him. It took several months before he could tolerate any movement with formal physical therapy. Brigid Meagher soon joined us, adding craniosacral therapy to the treatment regimen."

Dannaker's physical therapy included gentle exercise, restoration of the nerve lengths, and transfer and gait training. The intervention of Malka and Meagher made physical therapy possible. "Talia is amazing," declares Dannaker. "She envisions aspects you don't even consider, and she is calming, soothing, and reassuring. Brigid, too, is remarkable. Her comforting manner and body work are exceptional. Without all of these wonderful people in one building, I

would not be the person I am today."

After Dannaker regained driving confidence, another cellphone-selfish driver caused him to vigorously slam on his brakes, exacerbating the pain yet again. Back to the hospital. Back to the couch. Back to the very beginning of physical therapy. "I couldn't do anything for three months, but now that I'm with Chris and Talia again, I'm the happiest guy in the world. Though still in pain, I can finally see the light. They are determined

to get me better. If I ever won the lottery, I would gladly give it to them," he concludes with a broad smile. **CCL**

**Christine Hayes Physical Therapy  
The Integrated Healing Center**  
195 W. Lancaster Ave.  
Paoli, PA 19301  
610.695.9913  
CHayesPT.com  
MainlineIntegratedHealing.com

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