

OPPOSITES ATTRACT BY MARIE LEE

Skin care conference brings together medical and holistic approaches



Natural products, such as those being applied here, as well as the science behind skin care will be the focus of the Holistic Skin Care Practitioners Conference in Kalamazoo.

For example, Dr. Brad Bengtson, voted "Best Plastic Surgeon" by *Grand Rapids Magazine* readers, will focus on the newest non-surgical and natural corrective procedures that are being used in plastic surgery. Fedotova says that skin-care professionals need to know what the medical world is doing in order to respond to questions from their clients. "A client might come to you and say, 'I'm considering Botox,' and you have to be able to talk to them knowledgeably about that procedure as well as other options there may be," she says.

Dermatologist Dattner is "the star of the conference," says Fedotova. Dattner has employed holistic methods in his dermatology practice for more than 30 years and is considered a pioneer in the field. He will discuss his methods of treating inflammatory skin conditions with natural therapies.

Fedotova says she searched for many years to find someone of Dr. Dattner's caliber and expertise to be a part of the conference.

"Dermatologists and holistic aestheticians tend to work in opposite ways. Some might say we're considered enemies," says Fedotova. "It was really important to find a dermatologist to speak at our conference, someone who shares our holistic beliefs and uses them successfully in his treatment of patients. It's the perfect unity of medical and holistic practices."

This is the conference's fifth year, its fourth in Kalamazoo. Each year, the number of participants has grown, rising from 20 the first year to the more than 120 expected this year.

Fedotova credits the conference's growth with a growing demand by consumers for natural and organic treatments for their ailments. A 2007 National Health Interview Survey showed that approximately 38 percent of adults use alternative therapies. A 2011 survey by the Organic Trade Association revealed that the growth in the natural and organic food industry grew from \$1 billion in 1990 to \$26.7 billion in 2010.

"Consumers are asking for more natural and safe options in everything from their food to their health care," Fedotova says, noting that this especially true for skin care, where the negative side effects of popular acne-fighting drugs, such as Accutane, have been widely publicized.

That's why, she says, the conference's goal of "reaching across the aisle" to unite medical and holistic skin-care professionals is critically important.

"I think of those parents who have been told nothing except drugs and antibiotics are available to treat their children's skin problems," she says, "and how much comfort it would bring to them to hear a renowned dermatologist tell them that are other options. Holistic, safe options."

And it's Fedotova's hope that in time, synergies between the medical and holistic worlds such as these will simply become natural. 🌿

Think of it as a bridge between two worlds.

When several hundred skin-care practitioners and aestheticians from around the U.S. converge on Kalamazoo Oct. 21 and 22 for the annual Association of Holistic Skin Care Practitioners Conference at the Radisson Plaza Hotel & Suites, among the presenters and lecturers will be a well-known Grand Rapids plastic surgeon and New York dermatologist, Dr. Alan Dattner.

The words 'plastic surgeon' and 'holistic' don't seem to belong in the same sentence, but as Elina Fedotova, CEO of Elina Organics and the association's president, says, the conference is about "bringing together the best of both worlds."

"Wise practitioners — medical and holistic — understand that you have to know about the science and practice on both sides," she explains. "It's about education."