

The Spa as a Model of an Optimal Healing Environment

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ABSTRACT

“Spa” is an acronym for *salus per aqua*, or health through water. There currently are approximately 10,000 spas of all types in the United States. Most now focus on eating and weight programs with subcategories of sports activities and nutrition most prominent. The main reasons stated by clients for their use are stress reduction, specific medical or other health issues, eating and weight loss, rest and relaxation, fitness and exercise, and pampering and beauty. A detailed description of the Canyon Ranch, a spa facility in Tucson, AZ, is presented as a case study in this paper. It appears that the three most critical factors in creating an optimal healing environment in a spa venue are (1) a dedicated caring staff at all levels, (2) a mission driven organization that will not compromise, and (3) a sound business model and leadership that will ensure permanency.

HISTORIC ORIGINS

“Spa” is an acronym for *salus per aqua*, or health through water. J. Paul De Vierville traces the origin of the word spa to the early Latin verb *spargere*, which means to pour forth. He posits the modern word spa found its way into the English language through the old Walloon word, *espa*, which referred to a fountain. From *espa*, the English derived *spaw*.¹

It is impossible to pinpoint the inception of the first spa and spa treatments. It is known that the concept occurred simultaneously in different parts of Europe and Asia, where mineral springs and thermal mud were used for soothing and healing. “Taking the waters” for cleansing and purification prior to marriage and other religious ceremonies were practices in several cultures. The presence of spas in Bath, England, Baden Baden, Germany, and other sites in Switzerland, Austria, Italy, Belgium, and the Czech Republic indicate how widespread the movement was. Thalassotherapy, which is healing by using ocean waters, exists in many cultures from the Red Sea to Europe to Japan.²

According to the European Spa Association, which represents spas in 20 nations, there are more than 1200 spas and health resorts throughout Europe. Table 1 indicates their

most recent distribution.³ They are promoted as places of therapy and cure, rather than the pampering connotation that prevails in the United States. Alternative names for spas throughout Europe are beauty farms, wellness hotels, vital hotels, dream hotels, and fitness hotels.

Spas in several European countries are the beneficiaries of a government social health policy that provides lengthy stays for workers to heal and rejuvenate. Scandinavian countries, The Netherlands, and Germany have been sending citizens throughout Europe for spa vacations for decades.

In Germany, medical doctors have a specialized postmedical education that incorporates the study of climatology, balneology, and natural therapies. This training promotes the use of these natural therapies before resorting to medical drugs. The German Cure System (KUR) is utilized by physicians who have previously explored more conventional means, or when the patient is not sick enough to go to a hospital. The Cure involves the patient being sent to a spa village for 2 to 4 weeks where the climate and altitude are believed to have a positive impact. Insurance companies in Germany have been paying for these cure stays since the 1960s. They cite a 60% drop in sick days, a 66% decrease in prescription drug consumption, and long-term physical, mental, spiritual, and emotional improvements.⁴

Canyon Ranch Health Resorts, Tucson, AZ.

TABLE 1. SPA DISTRIBUTION BY COUNTRY

<i>Country</i>	<i>Qty.</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Qty.</i>
Germany	260	Poland	42
Estonia	12	Iceland	10
Finland	50	Montenegro	1
France	96	Switzerland	21
Greece	45	Slovakia	21
Great Britain	23	Spain	128
Italy	300	Czech Republic	34
Luxembourg	1	Turkey	100
Netherlands	4	Hungary	32
Austria	81		

A SPA IS A SPA IS NOT A SPA

The word spa leads to a variety of interpretations in the United States, none of which include any reference to places of healing. The following descriptions illustrate this point:

1. Club Spa—a facility, the primary purpose of which is fitness, which offers a variety of professionally administered spa services on a day-use basis.
2. Cruise Ship Spa—a spa onboard a cruise ship providing spa services, fitness, and often spa-cuisine menu choices.
3. Day Spa—a spa offering a variety of spa services on a day-use basis. The emphasis is on pampering services such as facials and body scrubs, not fitness.
4. Mineral Springs Spa—a spa with an onsite source of natural mineral springs or seawater, used in hydrotherapy treatments.
5. Resort/Hotel Spa—a spa located within a resort or hotel environment that provides spa services, fitness activities, spa-cuisine menu choices, and perhaps some wellness components.
6. Medi-Spa—a center where medical and spa professionals offer some wellness care in addition to spa services, most often in the area of cosmetic procedures.
7. Destination Spa—a facility, the sole purpose and mission of which is to provide guests with opportunities for lifestyle improvement and health enhancement through professionally administered spa services, fitness and educational programming, onsite accommodations, and a variety of health and healing services. Healthy cuisine is served exclusively.

UNITED STATES SPA INDUSTRY

There are currently approximately 10,000 spas of all types in the United States. The largest grouping is day spas, comprising approximately three quarters of the spas. Resort/hotel

spas are the second most numerous, with destination spas being the smallest group with only 25 listed in North America.

In 2001, there were approximately 156,000,000 visits made to spas; 68% of these were to day spas. Currently, the spa industry in the United States has 100,000,000 square feet under roof. Almost 50% of the space is occupied by treatment rooms (massage, body treatments as examples), and slightly more than 20% is designated as beauty space. The annual revenue in this industry is approximately \$11 billion. More than 50% of the revenue is derived from treatment rooms, with beauty and retail sales accounting for about 36%.⁵ There are nearly 285,000 people employed, of whom approximately 65% are fulltime. Wages and salaries in 2001 accounted for more than \$5 billion.

CANYON RANCH: A CASE STUDY

The evolution of the spa movement of today in the United States has had three major markers: (1) Rancho La Puerta in Tecate, Mexico, in the 1940s, (2) The Golden Door in southern California in the 1950s, and (3) Canyon Ranch in Tucson, AZ, in 1979. These three enterprises have been the models for spa development for the past five decades.

Rancho La Puerta modeled a return to nature and minimalism, with an emphasis on healthy eating and fitness. The Golden Door set the standard for small intimate centers of pampering and relaxation, with a high premium on aesthetic beauty. Canyon Ranch emerged at the end of the 1970s when the founders, the Zuckermans, chose to add to what these two institutions had established by bringing integrated health and healing into the Ranch menu of opportunities. Canyon Ranch now is the largest health resort in the country based on the number of guests, staff, and services provided.

The current twenty-first century practices of the Ranch related to nutrition, exercise, and health education have evolved rather than being the result of a long-range strategic plan. New service development has been the product of practitioner creativity and design, coupled with feedback from guests about their needs and desires. The determinant for change has been to be on the cutting edge of valid integration of traditional and credible nontraditional healing modalities, with prevention at the forefront. Thus, the following components now comprise the guest experience.

Medical

Eight medical doctors reside at Canyon Ranch; all are board certified. The specialties are women's health, internal medicine, sleep medicine, dermatology, public health, sports management, preventive medicine, and functional medicine. In addition to their education and training, all of these physicians were selected because they are excellent communica-

tors who prize prevention and healthy lifestyle as a framework from which to counsel guests. They provide education and motivation for guests, particularly in encouraging them to change lifestyle behaviors and to believe in prevention as their most effective tool in living a more optimal life.

The physicians are joined by podiatrists, chiropractors, physical therapists, and acupuncturists, and are complemented with 25 registered nurses with advanced training and qualifications in various modalities, including healing touch. The health services are integrated, and stress a holistic or integrated approach with a minimum of 50 minutes for each individual appointment.

Nutrition

Nine (9) registered dietitians assist the Food Development Department in designing the menus as well as advising guests on the relationships between food and health, fitness, and weight issues. Their information includes the latest scientific data on food, and addresses the frequently contradictory information put forth in the media. The nutrition staff works closely with the behavioral staff members in addressing the changing of eating habits on a permanent basis. Nutritional medicine and vitamin and mineral supplement consultations are performed by a team comprising a Canyon Ranch physician and a nutritionist. All menu planning is personalized on an individual basis, and there is no set Canyon Ranch “diet.”

Behavioral

Thirteen (13) behavioral health professionals, including clinical psychologists, offer consultations in sleep management, positive psychology, habit change, anger management, stress management, hypnotherapy, biofeedback, guided imagery, grief counseling, and relationship counseling. The retreat-like surroundings of the Ranch facilitate helping people evaluate what changes they want to make and how it best fits into their lifestyles.

Exercise physiology

Exercise physiologists have been a part of the Ranch staff since its inception. They work with guests on a one-to-one basis in organizing an exercise program that fosters and maintains vitality and stamina. Their emphasis includes issues of weight loss, weight maintenance, biomechanics, motor learning, strength training, and exercise adherence. All staff members have earned both a masters degree and a doctoral degree; as such, they bring a scientific expertise to the process.

Fitness

The Ranch started as primarily a fitness facility, and that focus has been maintained. A large staff, primarily com-

posed of physical therapists, assists guests in designing an individual program of physical activity to help them feel more energetic, decrease stress, enhance general wellbeing and increase self-esteem.⁶ In addition, there are *t'ai chi*, meditation, *qigong*, and yoga specialists, and an outdoor sports staff of hiking and biking specialists. Golf and tennis instruction also is available. The ultimate goal is to help people find a way to add movement into their lives.

Aquatic and movement therapy

Increasingly, guests are looking for alternative ways to move and feel more fully integrated in their lives and life styles. The movement and aquatic staff provide instruction in Pilates, gyrotonic, Feldenkrais, dance therapy, watsu, and other aquatic therapies. Drawn from dance, body work, somatics, martial arts and meditation, the focus is on helping the person find a modality that responds to his or her needs.

Body treatments

The range of body treatments, such as massage, herbal wraps, mud and water treatments, and aromatherapy, has grown considerably in the past 24 years. They are included largely because the founder believes they played a positive role in his transformation and are expected by spa goers. Currently, the Ranch employs more than 70 body therapists.

Staffing and services

Guests are on a variety of “journeys,” and each staff member contributes to a nurturing environment. Because the only “product” Canyon Ranch has to offer is the personalized service of staff, how the staff is regarded and the culture they experience every workday is critical. The business literature is replete with arguments for creating a trusting, empowering and communicative staff environment as one of the major building blocks for a successful organization.⁶⁻¹⁰

Staffing levels are based on the number of guests in house, and reflect the optimal level of service the Ranch can provide. These staffing level guidelines are a unique Canyon Ranch design based on 24 years of experience, and measured against in person guest comments or through written surveys. Unlike most hospitality organizations, the Ranch does not adjust staffing levels (i.e., layoff staff) for occupancy fluctuations. One result is that guests build personal relationships with practitioners, a factor that contributes to an enviably high guest return rate.

Tables 2 and 3 illustrate the distribution of staff and the multiple opportunities offered to guests.

For comparison, Table 4 lists the 25 top destination spas in North America with their respective staff and guest census.¹¹ There are no industry standards, and the staff-to-guest ratios are determined by how much each organization can afford to offer and remain profitable. The Canyon Ranch ra-

TABLE 2. CANYON RANCH STAFF BY DISCIPLINE OR DEPARTMENT

Medical doctors	8
Registered nurses	27
Behavioral staff	11
Nutritionists	9
Exercise physiologists	8
Movement therapists	14
Aquatic therapists	5
Acupuncturists	5
Neuromuscular therapists	5
Massage and other body therapists	69
Chiropractors	2
Culinary staff	52
Fitness staff	74
Physical therapists	2

tio of approximately three staff for every guest has evolved over the years. The decision to establish a particular staff-to-guest ratio is part science and part art form. In certain areas such as hotel services, there are comparative data available, (e.g., number of customers/stations per server and busser, number of rooms serviced per housekeeper). In addition to guest comments, staff visits to similar operations and membership in professional organizations provide opportunities for an exchange of experiences and ideas and the establishment of the appropriate ratios.

The physical environment

“What I hope for is to create a mood where people can let their best feelings come out.”¹² This stained glass artist was commenting on his goal as he created works of art for hospitals. He is part of a large movement in the health industry that has learned the critical importance of environmental design in creating centers of optimal healing.

There are ample references to the role of the importance of the physical environment in promoting healing.¹³⁻¹⁷ The Ranch leadership knew intuitively in 1978 that the physical facility (environment) would play a role in promoting optimal healing. Elaborately detailed landscaping plans were implemented with a vision of a future campus that would provide a stress-free environment and assist people in the healing process. The buildings on the Ranch were set to create small pockets of privacy, one building from the other. All buildings were designed to be one story, and to maximize views of the surrounding mountains. Roads throughout the Ranch were closed to vehicular traffic, no streetlights were erected, and night lighting was at ground level.

“Good design on its own cannot heal, but it can make science work better.”¹⁴ Lighting, offices, public and private spaces, finishes, wall coverings, acoustics, outdoor seating areas along the meditation path, and water artwork have all been designed to impact positively as people try to change their lifestyles. Just as in the delivery of health programs, one size does not fit all. Ulrich¹⁷ makes this case very clear

in his thoughts on the effects of interior design on wellness: “A difficult but important challenge for designers is to be sensitive to such group differences in orientations, and try to assess the gains or losses for one group vis-à-vis the other in attempting to achieve the goal of psychologically supportive design.”¹⁶ Evidence has been published showing that these models are more cost efficient and gain a substantial business advantage.^{5,14}

The guests' demography

Approximately 12,000 guests visit in a calendar year. On average, of the 275 in-house guests, 65% are female and 35% are male. They represent an affluent urban population with an average age of 48 years. Ninety-nine percent (99%) have completed at least some college or a 2-year degree, 85% have completed a 4-year degree, and more than 50% have advanced degrees at the masters or doctoral level. Significant numbers of both men and women come to the Ranch as single travelers. During the past decade, there have been a greater number of guests in their 70s and 80s, aging Baby Boomers, and people in their 20s. The two latter groups are the first generations of people who have been much more active and fit than their parents at a comparable age. Therefore, they have a sense of continued invincibility and desire to remain as active and healthy as possible. The common denominator for this broad age spread is a high priority on personal well-being.

Growth and development: Changes over the years

The major driving force for attendance at spas in the 1970s and 1980s was weight loss, hence the ignominious title “fat farms.” The opening of the Ranch saw guests fixated on eating as little food as possible combined with extensive exercise in order to lose pounds without regard for individual differences, body type, medical conditions, or other personal factors. Food served at the Ranch has changed from 800 calories per day with few choices (the norm at that time), to a healthy gourmet cuisine where the guest decides what and how much to eat. Nutritional information is provided on the menu and supported by nutrition staff doing rounds in the dining room and via private consultations.

TABLE 3. NUMBER OF SERVICES OFFERED BY DEPARTMENT

Medical	33
Behavioral	20
Exercise physiology	12
Movement therapy	16
Food and nutrition	18
Fitness	24
Outdoor sports	17
Body therapies	36
Skin care	54

TABLE 4. TWENTY-FIVE TOP DESTINATION SPAS IN NORTH AMERICA

<i>Spa and location</i>	<i>Guests</i>	<i>Staff</i>
Birdwing Spa, Litchfield, MN	25	15
Cal-a-Vie, Vista, CA	24	75
Canyon Ranch, Tucson, AZ	250	825
Canyon Ranch the Berkshires, Lenox, MA	220	650
Deerfield Spa, East Stroudsburg, PA	33	52
Golden Door, Escondido, CA	40	160
Green Mountain at Fox Run, Ludlow, VT	36	23
Green Valley Spa & Fitness Report, St. George, UT	48	120
The Heartland Spa, Gilman, IL	32	82
The Hills Health Ranch, British Columbia, Canada	100	100
Hosteria Las Quintas, Cuernavaca, Morelos, Mexico	60	170
The Kerr House, Grand Rapids, OH	5-8	25
Lake Austin Spa Resort, Austin, TX	65	150
Mountain Trek Fitness Retreat & Health Spa, British Columbia, Canada	14	28
New Age Health Spa, Neversink, NY	72	110
New Life Hiking Spa, Killington, VT	20-30	20
The Oaks at Ojai, Ojai, CA	79	110
The Palms at Palm Springs, Palm Springs, CA	80	80
The Raj, Vedic City, IA	18	75
Rancho La Puerta, Tecate, Baja California, Mexico	160	340
Red Mountain, Ivins, UT	202	210
Regency House Natural Health Spa, Hallandale, FL	70	76
Spa Eastman, Eastman, Quebec, Canada	60	130
Tennessee Fitness Spa, Waynesboro, TN	60	35
Westglow Spa, Blowing Rock, NC	25	60

Healthy eating practices, which can be duplicated at home, are the driving force, not deprivation.

The main reasons guests currently state for their stay (in order of importance to them) are: stress reduction, specific medical or other health issues, food and weight loss, rest and relaxation, fitness and exercise, and pampering and beauty. The fitness trend has moved away from hard aerobic activities into softer exercises such as outdoor sports such as hiking and biking. The holistic and integrative approach of the staff and services has resulted in growth in the healing and spirituality area as evidenced by the rapid climb of attendance in yoga and meditation classes.

Creating a successful visit: Four healing models

The Ranch has created a hierarchy of program options to meet the wide variety of needs and interests brought by the guests (Table 5).

APPLICATIONS OF SPA CULTURE AND TREATMENTS TO OTHER HEALING ENVIRONMENTS

The Price Waterhouse Coopers study commissioned by the spa industry in September 2002 identified several key points about its growth:

1. People no longer see the spa as purely pampering, but as a prerequisite to staying healthy and looking good.
2. Spas are offering a growing number of self-awareness and self-improvement activities. Most now focus on eating and weight programs with subcategories of sports activities and nutrition.
3. There has been a marked growth in the inclusion of health and medically oriented services into certain spas in the past 3 years.
4. Given the frantic schedules of most individuals today, the spa industry has responded by offering shorter stays to encourage more frequent visits.⁵

Health organizations, residential communities, hospitals, and community centers, among others, have begun to capture a vast market of people who are willing to purchase services to "feel and look better." For many of these organizations, it is a way to enhance their mission and create healthier environments. Some health care systems executives have recognized that the billions of dollars individuals are willing to spend out of pocket on modalities and body treatments such as massage, acupuncture and healing touch, for example, are deeply valued by the customer. These types of services currently are available at health organization locations such as:

- Tri Health Integrative Medical Center, Cincinnati, OH
- Scottsdale Hospital, Scottsdale, AZ

TABLE 5. FOUR MODELS FOR CONVEYING THE CANYON RANCH EXPERIENCE

<i>Program</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Major reasons guests enroll</i>	<i>Program design</i>
1. Life enhancement program (LEP) (7 days)	1 week structured residential group experience in separate Life Enhancement Center focusing on living a healthier lifestyle; integrative approach to optimal well-being, lectures, group workshops, and individual consultations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life feels out of control • Attempts at establishing exercise, food management, weight loss programs not successful • Stress level is high—not sure what to do • Do not feel good most of the time, something always seems to be out of whack • Want to learn about how to take responsibility for my own health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed intake interview with Life Enhancement Center staff • Several prearrival consultations re: program design with Life Enhancement Center Staff • Group educational sessions (lectures and workshops) • Individual consultations with health professionals • Group and individual exercise classes • Separate faculty—exclusively for LEP participants • Materials/information prepared for back home health professionals • Take-home plan • Follow-up phone calls • Same as LEP • Faculty includes outside experts (e.g., Joslin Diabetes Clinic, UA Cardiology Department)
2. Special health weeks (7 days)	One-week residential program in the Life Enhancement Center; integrative approach to specific health conditions (arthritis, aging, diabetes, midlife journey, healthy heart); partner with specialists from University of Arizona, Joslin Clinic, in addition to Canyon Ranch faculty.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suffer with the condition (diabetes, arthritis, etc.) • Family history of disease—want to minimize the negative impact • Family member has the condition—want to learn more about how best to handle • Looking for a variety of ways to improve my condition beyond traditional/medical approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prearrival call for focus and schedule • Health Package Coordinator, registered nurse, one-on-one meeting—day 1 • Individual consults in a variety of departments • Meeting with Health Package Coordinator for wrap-up and take home • All Ranch Spa and H&H services open to participants • Follow-up phone call • Prearrival call w/program coordinator for scheduling • All Spa and H&H services available • Follow-up will vary based on services taken
3. Health packages (minimum 4 days)	4-day programs on <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight management • Stress management • Smoking Cessation Integrative individual consultations focusing on how to change health behavior as well as taking stock of where one is at this point <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Health Program 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Want to lose weight, stop smoking, feel less stressed (previous attempts unsuccessful) • 4 days at the Ranch—a good time to learn about these issues—may be something new • Comprehensive health assessment and plan for optimal well-being 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prearrival call for focus and schedule • Health Package Coordinator, registered nurse, one-on-one meeting—day 1 • Individual consults in a variety of departments • Meeting with Health Package Coordinator for wrap-up and take home • All Ranch Spa and H&H services open to participants • Follow-up phone call • Prearrival call w/program coordinator for scheduling • All Spa and H&H services available • Follow-up will vary based on services taken
4. Spa-resort services (various length)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most commonly the pure vacation; guest able to choose from any of the Spa and Health & Healing (H&H) services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coming for rest and recreation • Heard about Canyon Ranch for years • Just need a timeout from fast-paced life • Love the desert and want to hike 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prearrival call for focus and schedule • Health Package Coordinator, registered nurse, one-on-one meeting—day 1 • Individual consults in a variety of departments • Meeting with Health Package Coordinator for wrap-up and take home • All Ranch Spa and H&H services open to participants • Follow-up phone call • Prearrival call w/program coordinator for scheduling • All Spa and H&H services available • Follow-up will vary based on services taken

- Floyd Center for Health & Healing, Rome, GA
- Florida Hospital, Celebration, FL
- Presbyterian Center for Integrative Medicine, Charlotte, NC

The spa industry also has learned that significant opportunities exist when they add medical and other health services into their spa environments. On the surface, combining health care and spa services addresses one of the factors guests see

as valuable, namely, having everything they desire under one roof. Some current examples of this approach are:

- Greenbrier Resort, White Sulphur Springs, WV
- La Quinta Resort, Palm Springs, CA
- La Costa Resort, Carlsbad, CA

Health care organizations integrating spa services into its offerings hold greater potential for success than health services in a spa setting. The two factors that determine this are the public's perception of the credibility of the sponsoring organization and the financial reality. It is much easier to incorporate moderately priced body workers into the health care financial structure than it is to employ a medical doctor, registered dietician or doctor of philosophy into a spa setting.

However, what could undermine this potential for future success is the philosophy and organization of traditional health care systems that have been devoted to the pure science and technology of treating the sick individual, rather than building staff and programs oriented to prevention and optimal health. It is not that this process cannot be accomplished. Rather, it must be done in a way that does not create a caste system among staff and services while implementing a massive turning of the direction of the enterprise. This undertaking requires commitment and investment rather than the superficiality of public relations or corporate statements.

Given the amount of money being spent, it is clear that the public has unmet needs. Therefore, the health educators, practitioners and others who are well trained, have high ethical standards, and are willing to expand the boundaries of their professions, can capture this vast market. Otherwise, it will fall to the charlatans, snake-oil salesmen, and others preying on the health and aging phobias of the public. For long-term financial remedies to make this model available to greater numbers of people, it is critical to obtain the recognition of an integrative preventive model of health for reimbursement by the health insurance industry.

HYPOTHESES REQUIRING TESTING

The ingredient most vital to the future success of the American spa movement is definitive research to validate or invalidate some of the work being undertaken. Because the mission is to help people live a healthier life by making the necessary lifestyle changes, there is a need to quantify what is effective beyond anecdotal data. Several of the most pressing hypotheses that need testing are:

1. The combination of specific educational programs, medical, behavioral, nutritional and exercise consultations, spa treatments, and first-hand practice with healthy behaviors leads to an increased feeling of individual empowerment and well-being, and improved emotional and physical well-being.

2. The small, integrated group focused residential Life Enhancement Center environment produces significant lifestyle changes in a shorter time interval than in a back-home setting.
3. The immersion and reflective time given to guests during a stay translates into more sustained lifestyle changes than comparable work attempted in the home or work setting.
4. The ability for guests to have continued interaction with their health practitioners by telephone or electronically after they leave a health spa will enhance the positive and lasting benefits of their experience.
5. Interaction between the guest and staff prior to arrival will positively impact the quality of care provided, the timeliness of the treatments and acceptance by the guest.
6. Identifying facilities in the guest's locale for maintaining an ongoing health link once they return home will enhance the likelihood of permanent change.
7. Assigning a guide/coach to each guest from prearrival to departure will enable the guest to select more focused treatments and services and help them navigate through the healing environment with greater ease and less stress.
8. Creating an environment that takes into consideration the research on the impact of color, light, sound, texture and the environment in making a positive impact on the healing process will result in healthier staff and guests.
9. Organizational activities that create a positive staff culture will pay dividends to the organization in lower staff turnover and greater guest satisfaction.
10. Scholarship guests will experience the same degree of lifestyle change and awareness that the traditional paying guest experiences.
11. The opportunity to interact with other individuals with similar issues and concerns in a variety of structured educational and recreational settings will bring about lasting health changes.
12. The integration of spa services, such as massage and water treatments, combined with medicine, nutrition, exercise and behavioral expertise will produce a healthier individual.
13. Spirituality can be effectively taught as part of the guest's experience at a health spa in a variety of formats.

In summary, the three most critical factors in creating an optimal healing environment at any price point are: (1) a dedicated, caring staff at all levels, (2) a mission driven organization that will not compromise who they are, and (3) a sound business model and leadership that will ensure permanency. Dr. Jesse Williams in the 1930s provided an excellent description of a health philosophy that emphasizes these three points:

It's of value to think of health as that condition of the individual that makes possible the highest enjoyment of life. Health, when thought of simply as the absence

of disease, is a standard of mediocrity, but when thought of as a quality of life is a standard of inspiration and ever-increasing achievement.¹⁸

—Jesse F. Williams, M.D.

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