



Letter to the editor

The choice is yours: make an informed decision!

Vancouver, October 20, 2015

A recent article in the Vancouver Sun published on October 15, 2015, - Chinese herbs mixed with medications can be hazardous - stated that using traditional Chinese herbal remedies while also taking prescription medications could cause potentially life-threatening reactions.

While communication between you and your healthcare practitioner is essential and encouraged, it is also imperative to confirm that they are qualified and certified to advise you. The BC Health Regulators' society urges the public to take precautionary action and check that your health care professional of choice is licensed to practise in BC by a regulatory college before booking an appointment. Alternative health care adds up to a multi-billion dollar industry, and you can and should educate yourself and become aware of your consumer and legal rights.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, 70 percent of *all* Canadians regularly use complementary and alternative health care therapies and it acknowledges a range of services that include, but are not limited to, Aboriginal healing, chiropractic, naturopathy, reiki, acupuncture, massage, reflexology and yoga. Furthermore, natural and non-prescription health products such as vitamins and minerals, herbal remedies, homeopathic medicines, traditional Chinese medicines and probiotics are acknowledged and regulated by Health Canada.

The BC Health Regulators' mandate is to protect the public, so you can expect qualified, ethical and safe care from regulated health care providers. It represents more than 20 regulatory colleges governed by the *Health Professions Act* and the *Social Workers Act*. These colleges handle setting and enforcing the standards, or rules, of their professions.

The choice is yours: but be sure to make an informed decision! Registered health professionals, offering complementary and alternative health services and advice, can be effective. For a list of Colleges that regulate traditional and alternative health professionals such as the College of Traditional Chinese Medicine Practitioners and Acupuncturists of BC visit www.bchealthregulators.ca.