



Darrell Tanelian, left, a physician, and Howard Reisman, a businessman, are behind the Stowe-based business called Health Connexin.
PHOTO BY GLENN CALLAHAN

Wellness system starts with a molecule

Stowe company emphasizes a fitness lifestyle.

By Marina Knight

It may sound crazy, but soon there may be a health-care revolution that will sweep the country, then the world, and it may begin with a Stowe-based business called Health Connexin.

At least, that's what Howard Reisman and Darrell Tanelian say. The pair, a successful businessman and a medical doctor, are getting ready to take their big idea public. It's likely to cause a stir.

They denounce the health-care system in America (calling it instead the health-sick system), saying it is costing people more and more money while making them sicker and sicker. They say we can prevent illness by optimizing our bodies' cellular connectivity and thus extend our lives, increase our wealth and help curtail the prevalence of some diseases.

"I'm a living example of what we're doing," Reisman said, walking around his Stowe Hollow home at a brisk clip.

Reisman and Tanelian have been experimenting with their own plan, taking vitamin supplements made by Tanelian, measuring their body pH balance, eating a nutrient-rich Mediterranean diet and exercising regularly. They say they feel great, have improved their health, and now they want the rest of the world to join them.

"I feel like a 20-year old," said Reisman, who's 61. Tanelian's wife, who is also on the plan, has reversed osteoporosis and actually regained bone density at the age of 62.

Health Connexin turned business when Reisman, a semi-retired businessman living in California, decided to help take Tanelian's research and frustration with the American approach to health care and turn it into the country's latest Atkins Diet craze.

They decided to base the business in Stowe, because it's where Reisman owns a home and enjoys spending much of his time. This week, the two held several seminars in the area, presenting their idea to a public audience for the first time.

Their health plan, Health Connexin, centers on the premise that the key to solving many major health ailments does not lie in medicines distributed by doctors once we are sick. Instead, the key lies in thousands of tiny molecules inside our bodies called connexins. The connexin molecule is what binds cells together, allowing them to communicate and perform all the functions that keep us healthy and fit.

According to Tanelian, who has been researching the connexin molecule for more than 10 years, diet and other lifestyle choices determine the integrity of the connections between our cells. Recently, he says, many Americans have been destroying those connections by eating improperly.

"A decrease in connexin function is linked to heart disease, cancer, arthritis, osteoporosis and Alzheimer's. They are not separate diseases; they are all the same dysfunction. If you benefit the underlying problem, connexin, these things can be prevented," Tanelian said.

He says there is ample evidence that by eating right, exercising and making other lifestyle choices, the connexin function can be optimized. Once that happens, certain diseases will be prevented, and it becomes easier to maintain health and extend life.

"The concept that there is a quick fix or a magic panacea is a delusion. The direction we should be headed in is taking care of ourselves before we get sick," Tanelian said.

The Health Connexin plan, a molecular fitness lifestyle, is a health pack that can be bought online at the company's Web site. It includes a blood-pressure tester and other equipment to monitor your body, a month's supply of MineralConnexin and MultiConnexin dietary supplements, and a book explaining how people can get started on the plan. The supplements can be bought separately, as well.

They have also built an in-depth Web site where users can log in and keep track of their own health online.

"The best part about it is that everybody has a molecular operating system. Depending on what you put into it, it's more or less efficient," Reisman said. "It's a difficult challenge, but this works. The question is are people really interested in taking care of themselves?"

Soon to come, Reisman said, are several other books, including a cookbook with molecule-enhancing recipes.

They point out that Health Connexin is not a weight-loss program like the Atkins Diet. Instead, it is a lifestyle that will lead to well-being.

This fall, Reisman and Tanelian will televise a 30-minute infomercial explaining Health Connexin and making their products available to a wider audience. They say they plan to keep their base in Stowe, and have spoken with Vermont government officials to see if they can incorporate Health Connexin in the state's health-care system.

"We are going to be for wellness what Ben & Jerry's was for Vermont and ice cream," Reisman said. "We're putting wellness in a box. It can be the catalyst for industry."

Reisman said he would eventually like to develop a research institute in the state.

"Vermont has the opportunity to lead the nation for wellness. We have the vision, but we have to convince the right people," Reisman said. "Everybody holds the key to health. They have it right inside them."