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Next Stop:
Immortality

The world of anti-aging medicine is developing quickly, and the benefits will impact us all. The FDA, long a foe to alternative medicine advocates, now has a separate section for the review and approval of anti-aging therapies. The National Institute on Aging and prestigious medical journals, including the Journal of the American Medical Association, have recognized the importance of alternative therapies for both prevention and treatment. And JAMA has announced that for the first time a majority of its physician subscribers demand more information about alternative medicine. The result will be that science will rapidly aid each of us in our own personal quest for health and longevity.

Here, Life Extension presents developments and personalities that may well help pave the way toward just that . . . burgeoning scientific validation, and the means toward, ultimate immortality.

<p>A new anti-aging organization, headed by a dynamic medical pioneer, promises to bring together the best minds in the field, with support and certification, to assure continuing development and anti-aging results.</p>	<p>With his three Arabian horses, a rustic but gracious 4,000-square-foot Santa Fe-style home, and 15 acres of pinon pines that thrive in some of the cleanest air in the country, Dr. Garry Gordon could live in Payson, Ariz., forever.</p>
	<p>Literally.</p>
	<p>Gordon, trim and fit at 63, is counting on at least 60 more years of robust life. And within 10 years, he predicts, science could have the keys to ensuring life spans of as long as 600 years.</p>
	<p>Next stop: immortality. He could outlive several generations of his horses.</p>

By Barbara Yost Gordon is president of a new organization whose mission is to promote long, vigorous lives and train health care professionals in anti-aging medicine. The International College for Advanced Longevity Medicine (ICALM), founded last November, will hold its first training workshops in May.

ICALM boasts a distinguished board of directors, including such experts in the field of anti-aging as Julian Whitaker, editor of the newsletter Health and Healing; Robert C. Atkins, cardiologist and author of books on alternative medicine; Leo Galland, internist and author of Four Pillars of Healing; Ward Dean, co-editor of the book Smart Drugs; Arthur Balin, a dermatologist and executive director of the American Aging Association; Jonathan Wright, co-editor of the Wright-Gaby Newsletter and director of the Tahoma Clinic in Kent, Wash.; and Sarafino Corsello, a specialist in preventive and nutritional chelation and hormonal therapies.



Dr. Garry Gordon is a true believer in the imminence of a dramatically extended life span, and founder of a scientific organization to help spur it on.

Headquartered in Chicago, the new group's mandate will be to train physicians and others in allied health categories in the burgeoning field of anti-aging medicine and research. It also will sponsor conferences and workshops, and promote research into age-related diseases. Its certifying board, the International Board of Advanced Longevity Medicine (IBALM), will offer credentials to candidates for diplomas in the anti-aging field to those who complete three weekend courses and pass a written exam administered and proctored by IBALM. Graduates will be fully certified after completing an approved research project, treating patients and passing an oral exam.

The examination will cover nutrition, diet and exercise, biomarker testing, pathophysiology of normal aging, pharmacology of potential longevity medications and hormones, including toxicology, informed consent requirements, longevity protocols, molecular biology, genetic engineering and genetic therapy.

"We'll have claws. We'll take away credentials," Gordon promises, saying his certifying board's clout will come from its prestigious membership. "I want to protect the public from hucksters."

The certifying board will establish separate credentialing committees for each examination appropriate to individual professions and health categories, such as medical doctors, doctors of osteopathy, Ph.D.s, registered nurses and physicians' assistants.

The American Academy of Anti-Aging Medicine (A4M), a similar professional organization also based in Chicago, has been in existence for five years. But Gordon believes the field can support two such groups.

"The field is exploding around us," he says from his Payson compound, where, as "a doctor of last resort," he diagnoses and advises seriously ill patients who have found little relief through conventional medicine. Much of his practice is also devoted to the young and healthy who want to stay that way and extend their lives beyond what is conventionally considered a normal life span.

"I've known for 30 years now that I am going to live a lot longer than anybody dreamed. In 10 years, it will be a given that everyone will be entitled to life spans of a minimum of 120 years if they take care of their bodies."

--Dr. Garry Gordon, ICALM president

"It's everything coming together," Gordon says, noting that Baby Boomers have the desire and the financial means to enhance their health through state-of-the-art nutritional and medical advice. "And science has progressed to the point where it can deliver it. Youth is in. Age is out."

He says that if the American government made anti-aging research a top priority, significant life extension could be accomplished in less than 10 years. But, he believes that government fears of helping its citizens live longer is not in the best interest of a society reluctant to add years to the Medicare rolls.

"The government has a conflict," he says. "It's not in its interest to have anybody live another 30 years. It's not in its interest to promote life expectancy."

For that reason, he says, a private organization like ICALM is needed.



Gordon cites several cutting-edge developments in the field of anti-aging that he finds most exciting and that ICALM will help to research and promote:

- ALT711, a drug now entering the human-trial phase, is believed effective in inhibiting the creation of cross-links between proteins in the body that cause a kind of "molecular glue" known as advanced glycosylation end-products (AGEs). AGEs contribute to disabling stiffness that appears in cells, tissues and organs as we age. ALT711 and similar compounds being developed by a company in Ramsey, N.J., called Alteon, break AGEs cross-links.
- Telomerase, the so-called "immortalizing" enzyme being studied by the California-based Geron Corporation and the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, in Dallas, is another exciting development. Earlier this year, Geron reported the successful extension of the life span of normal human cells using telomerase, which imparts replicative immortality when expressed in reproductive and cancer cells. Conversely, cells that do not express the enzyme are mortal.

Telomeres are chains of repeated DNA segments located at the ends of chromosomes, like the plastic tips on the ends of shoe laces. As cells divide, small bits of telomeric DNA decay, eventually signaling the cells to stop dividing. Promoting continued cell division may be the secret to longevity.

- Alternative therapy is another area. Non-conventional methods of treatment, including acupuncture, traditional Oriental medicine, herbal remedies, chelation (Gordon is often referred to as the "father of chelation") and hormones are slowly being accepted by the established medical community. Gordon notes that the National Institutes of Health now has a division of alternative medicine, and that the Food and Drug Administration has established a section to review and approve anti-aging therapies.

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