

# PORTLAND BUSINESS JOURNAL

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## Natural medicine school expanding

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The **National College of Natural Medicine** announced it is purchasing three buildings that will add one-third more space to its operations.

The purchase is part of NCNM's plan to expand its enrollment from 500 full-time and 100 part-time students to 1,200 full-time and 300 part-time students over the next five to seven years.

NCNM, located in downtown Portland near the Ross Island Bridge, is the nation's oldest accredited college of natural medicine. It offers four-year degrees in naturopathic medicine and classical Chinese medicine, as well as continuing education for medical practitioners.

The college would not say how much it is paying for the three buildings adjacent to its main campus building on Southwest Porter Street, but confirmed the price tag is "several" million dollars.

To pay for the 41,000 square feet of new space, and for expanding academic and clinic operations, the college is embarking on its first-ever capital campaign. The college has already raised nearly \$2.1 million, and has set a goal of \$30 million, said Susan Hunter, vice president of advancement for NCNM.

Annual tuition at NCNM is about \$20,000, and the college has told students it will not raise tuition to pay for the new buildings.

In addition to its 50,000-square-foot main campus building, NCNM has a 25,000-square-foot administrative building nearby on Southwest Hooker Street; a clinic on Southwest First Avenue; and a clinic in leased space on Northwest Pettygrove. The school plans to move the Pettygrove clinic to its new space, and may move the First Avenue clinic as well.

Though the natural medicine school hasn't done much fund raising in the past, at least one local business person has made significant contributions.

Donald Helfgott, co-founder and CEO of Beaverton-based Inspiration Software Inc., has donated about \$1 million for research over the past five years. NCNM has named its research institute after him.

Helfgott said he donates to NCNM because "the healthcare system is broken in a number of ways."

He realized that so little scientific research has been done into alternative medicine that a relatively small amount of money could be parlayed into important discoveries.

"There's a lot of low-hanging fruit, and high leverage for contributions in that area," Helfgott said.

Portland is an important center for alternative medicine, Helfgott pointed out. In addition to NCNM, the city is home to the Oriental College of Medicine, and alternative medicine is also practiced and investigated at Oregon Health and Science University and at Kaiser Permanente.

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