



Steve Lathrop/Descoeur-Herms

Toni Gilbert has taken the lead in organizing the Oregon Holistic Nurses Association, creating a website and working to organize a registry. A holistic nurse for 10 years, she works from her home in Jefferson.

Jefferson nurse at the forefront

BY STEVE LATHROP
ALBANY DEMOCRAT/HERALD

JEFFERSON — From a grass roots beginning to mainstream recognition, holistic nursing has taken flight.

That's probably why Toni Gilbert sometimes feels as if she is piloting a jet airplane.

Working from her Jefferson home, Gilbert is the driving force behind the Oregon Holistic Nurses Association, which she founded less than a year ago.

A registered nurse for more than 20 years, Gilbert has spent the last 10 as a holistic nurse. Holistic nursing encompasses a respect for mind, body and spirit of self, Gilbert says.

In her practice she applies a background in psychology and art, offering clients various therapies including meditation, guided imagery and tarot counseling.

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Gilbert created a website for the association, www.oregonholisticnurses.org, and is hoping it will grow quickly.

"Nothing happens fast enough for me," says Gilbert, who began the organization solely as a volunteer. "It takes time to build. Sometimes I feel like I'm flying a 747 with a lot of cargo."

Since the site launched, Gilbert has registered 13 holistic nurses statewide. She envisions not only a directory but a place for sharing information, providing a forum for discussion and online counseling, a tool she uses in her own practice.

"The response has been very sweet," Gilbert says. "I'm encouraged. It's a wonderful group."

Expanding the site's directory base is a high priority. "I look at it as a cog in the wheel," Gilbert says. "We provide the spokes that branch out all over Oregon."

The association is part of the American Holistic Nurses Association, based in Flagstaff, Ariz.

Oregon's association is an active one, according to Gilbert. Members will attend former Gov. John Kitzhaber's Archimedes Movement Convention in Portland in June and will hold their own retreat at Breitenbush in October.

Association membership is \$30. Interested holistic nurses should contact Gilbert at 327-7749 or toni@tonigilbert.com, or visit www.oregonholisticnurses.org.

"We would love to see more Albany-area nurses take part," Gilbert said. "We welcome their camaraderie."