



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For further information:

John Kepner, Executive Director

International Association of Yoga Therapists

jkepner@iayt.org

(501)-310-1121

INTERNATIONAL YOGA THERAPY CONFERENCE IN AUSTIN FOCUSES ON
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND INTEGRATION WITH CONVENTIONAL WESTERN
HEALTHCARE

April 23, 2014—AUSTIN, Texas—Austin is the site of the sixth annual Symposium on Yoga Therapy and Research (SYTAR) June 5-8, sponsored by the International Association of Yoga Therapists, a professional organization serving yoga teachers and yoga therapists worldwide. This conference, dedicated to education, research, practice and policy issues for yoga therapy, is widely acknowledged as the premier event in the field.

“IAYT’s mission is to establish yoga as a recognized and respected therapy,” said **John Kepner**, executive director of the 25-year-old nonprofit organization. “This symposium is like a *sutra* —a pithy aphorism in yoga -- in that it has strong implications for research and education in the field, and high standards for practitioners. Despite the thousands of years of history of yoga as a healing practice, there are many more steps required to integrate yoga as a complementary and integrated practice in our western health care systems, including providing a professional voice for yoga in public policy forums on healthcare.

“This year’s symposium will include a wealth of information on the integration of yoga into health care and healing, especially cancer and heart disease,” Kepner said. “Many of the leading experts in the world will be there, among more than 40 presenters from as far away as Australia, India, Japan and New Zealand.”

“Austin may be known as the world capital of live music, but it’s also a huge center for yoga,” said **Charles MacInerney**, a yoga teacher and yoga therapist in Austin for 25 years. “In fact, there are more registered yoga teachers in Austin than San Francisco and 10 times more teachers per capita than in New York City. So we’re especially glad this conference is taking place here.” MacInerney also puts on the annual Texas Yoga Retreat at Austin’s Ancient Yoga Center.

The symposium will be at the Renaissance Austin Hotel, with these luminaries in cancer care among the presenters:

--**Lorenzo Cohen, PhD**, professor and director of the Integrative Medicine Program at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, will give the keynote speech on Friday, June 6. Cohen will discuss his clinical trials examining different types of complementary therapies, including yoga, that can be added to conventional cancer treatment to help reduce negative aspects of treatment while improving patients' quality of life and clinical outcomes. Cohen also is a distinguished clinical professor at Fudan University Cancer Hospital in Shanghai, and a founding member and on the executive committee of the international Society for Integrative Oncology.

--**Michael Lerner, PhD**, president and founder of Commonweal in Bolinas, CA, will deliver Saturday's keynote on "Yoga and Intentional Healing: Lessons from the Commonweal Cancer Help Program." Recipient of a prestigious MacArthur Prize Fellowship, Lerner has created signature programs including the Commonweal Cancer Help Program, an internationally acclaimed support program for cancer patients. His Institute for the Study of Health and Illness offers "Healer's Art" programs in 70 medical schools.

--**Lee Majewski** is a yoga therapist at Kaivalyadhama Yoga Institute, Lonavla, India, the world's oldest yoga research center. She will present their detoxification and rejuvenation therapy programs, which she has helped create and has taught, for cancer survivors recovering from chemotherapy.

--**Jnani Chapman, RN, CMT**, is a long time trainer of yoga therapists working with cancer patients and practices yoga therapy, acupuncture and massage at St. Mary's Medical Center in San Francisco in oncology and senior services. She is also a staff member of Commonweal and Smith Center cancer-help programs and was a stress management specialist for Dean Ornish's Heart Disease Reversal Program.

Along with Cohen and MacInerney, other Texans among the presenters are **Nydia Tijerina Darby, MS, PT**, from San Antonio; **Peggy Kelly**, who teaches yoga and Ayurveda, the traditional system of Indian healthcare, in Austin; **Lisa Galiza**, founder of Austin's Bee Cave Yoga and graduate of the pioneering Yoga Therapy Rx and Prime of Life Yoga programs at Loyola Marymount University; and **Heather Reed**, yoga teacher and co-facilitator for the Residential Retreat Program for Cancer Navigators of Rome, GA, who also teaches privately in Austin. Thursday's keynote speaker, **Judith Hanson Lasater, PT, PhD**, will soon be returning to Austin from California.

Additional health topics during the conference include heart health, with a presentation by **Susi Amendola**, yoga therapist and national director of stress management for the Dean Ornish Program for Reversing Heart Disease Without Drugs or Surgery in hospitals around the country. Paired with her presentation will be **Dr. Vasant Lad** of the Ayurvedic Institute in Albuquerque speaking on the healthy heart through Ayurveda and yoga.

Attention will also be given to yoga therapy in an integrated treatment of pain management, sleep disorders, post traumatic stress disorder, Type 2 diabetes, anxiety and depression, and ayurvedic medicine, as well as yoga therapy programs developed to support people facing trauma, violence and life-threatening illness, and for disabled individuals. **Madoka**

Oruzuka Chase, MA, from Japan, will discuss yoga therapy for victims recovering from her country's 2011 earthquakes and tsunamis and nuclear disasters.

Attendees representing IAYT's 120 member schools from around the world (including five in Texas) will meet just before SYTAR to discuss IAYT's new accreditation process for yoga therapy training programs that meet the IAYT standards, as well as preparing for the future of the field.

The annual post conference R&R session, Sunday through Thursday will take place at Austin's Ancient Yoga Center for informal discussions and get-togethers.

IAYT publishes the International Journal of Yoga Therapy and Yoga Therapy Today, also presents an annual academic research conference, the Symposium on Yoga Therapy, and provides rigorous accreditation services for yoga therapy training programs that meet the new IAYT standards. For more information on IAYT and the conference, see www.iayt.org.