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Working in Medical Spas

BY DIANE Y. CHAPMAN

masse an aversion to the concept of physical aging—and to become a driving financial force in the quest to defy the inevitability of growing older. They'll mature without kicking and screaming, but they won't watch their faces fall, their hair go gray or their abdomens expand. These beliefs are catapulting the antiaging industry into a massive marketing force in America.

The marriage of antiaging services, skin and body care treatments and conventional medicine has resulted in a new type of business model: the antiaging "medical spa." This type of spa offers a combination of physician-supervised medical care, alternative health care, skin care treatments, fitness consulting and instruction, stress management and relaxation treat-

ments. Fitness professionals can catch the wave of this exciting new market and ride it to profit and career satisfaction.

Growth of the Spa Industry

To envision how fitness professionals can fit into the medical spa arena, it helps to understand the tremendous growth in the spa category in general. Spas are thriving:

- The spa industry continues to grow at an extremely healthy pace, with industry revenues approaching

My Experience With Medical Spas

Three years ago I had no idea I was about to become part of the medical spa world. I was at the gym exercising on a treadmill next to the one occupied by Michael Otoupalik, DC, a sports medicine chiropractor. We were talking about business and discussing the reason women cancel important appointments. I said I thought they canceled appointments to replace something they needed to do with something they wanted to do. I mentioned that if I could start my business over, I'd choose one that pampered women. Michael agreed.

The next thing I knew, he was calling me to ask if I wanted to help him turn his chiropractic office into a medical spa antiaging business. I now work 10 to 20 hours a week as an independent contractor at La Santé in Aliso Viejo, California. I help him structure the fitness services that are a natural offshoot of what he was already doing with chiropractic care and sports rehabilitation.

I find work in the medical spa environment fun and challenging. I'm in my 40s and am fascinated to learn about antiaging and spa treatments. I became La Santé's product researcher for skin care and now make additional money through the knowledge I bring to the spa about skin care technologies.

I now also work with DeAnn Mix, PhD, an expert in medical skin rejuvenation techniques, and Alex Martin, MD, FACP, who specializes in antiaging therapies. I am consulting for them as they create a large day spa called Ergonique, currently being built in Newport Beach, California.

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