

An "Alternative" Law

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NON-CONVENTIONAL MEDICINEAN "ALTERNATIVE" LAW The situation after the Medical Association turned out in favor of non-conventional therapiesBy Anna Maria Messa

The first step has been taken: the integration of alternative therapies into the bedrock of conventional medicine is a fact. But there's still a lot to do. Starting with the law. Right now the Commission for Social Affairs is starting discussions on the 14 proposals presented, after which comes the unified text, and then, towards the end of October, it is expected to pass to the Chamber. "In order to achieve a normative, the proposals refer to doctors practicing these therapies, despite the fact that there are few of them that understand the logic and application of these disciplines," points out Luigi Giacco, psychotherapist, founder and scientific director in Osimo of the Lega del Filo d'oro, and rapporteur for proposal, C. 1103 (Giacco, Gambini, Ds-Ulivo) presented in June 2001. An outline law on alternative therapies signed by everyone, from extreme right to extreme left. In reality, a new edition (including the various alterations approved during the previous passage through Parliament) of law proposal n° 3891, the "Galletti/Giacco" law, which came to a halt after three years into its proceedings, with the end of the XIIIth legislature. Among the matters to be discussed, "the recognition of people who are not qualified doctors, but who have practiced these therapies seriously and with professionalism, relative to doctors who have never practiced them. Now they need to be able to work, perhaps even in synergy with the doctors themselves," says Luigi Giacco. Recognition is also desired "for the schools, which have worked well in recent years, and in direct contact with other European countries." It is right that only graduated doctors should practice, and that osteopaths and chiropractors should have to attain a 5-year degree, like in other European countries, agrees Francesco P. Lucchese, a neonatal pediatrician, ex-chief-specialist in pediatrics at Alcamo hospital, and rapporteur for law proposal C. 640 C. (CCD-CDU, now UDC), but "those who have done training courses should have recognition of the qualifications attained from the Medical Association, which could, perhaps, be integrated into their studies. There ought to be registers at the Medical Association, and 3-year post-graduate training courses for doctors. A separate register for those working in reflexology, shiatsu and naturopathy." For them, Francesco Lucchese foresees a shorter 3-year degree course, similar to that proposed in law n° 251, 1999, for nurses, rehabilitation and prevention workers, and radiologists. These therapies go to complete the course of treatment recommended by the doctor, but those who practice do not make diagnoses and must not interfere with the treatment. "We need to transform university studies, starting with the pharmacology exam," explains Giuseppe Del Barone, president of the Naples Medical Association and of the National Federation of Medical and Dental Associations; "the proposed national agency, alongside the Federation, the Ministries of Health and Education and the regional governments, ought to regulate training programs and define criteria and requirements for the accreditation of public and private subjects who are to undergo training".