

# Physiatrist Harriss says he takes holistic approach to care

Intell Sept 4/02 p.4

• Story continued from page 1.

Harriss said his treatment is rooted in a "holistic approach" — non-addictive drugs, and healthy lifestyles such as eating properly, enrolling in a gym and "quitting smoking."

Smoking won't prevent Harriss from treating a patient. However, there's a catch.

"I'll see you, but be prepared for a lecture."

Harriss says people confuse him with a psychiatrist "all the time." He joins Dr. Craig McInnes as the second physiatrist in Belleville and there are four in Kingston.

"We are pretty rare."

Physiatry has its roots in the Second World War when men returned with physical disabilities. Physiatrists work closely with other specialists in rehabilitation, including nurses, physiotherapists, occupational speech and language therapists and psychologists.

The native of Peterborough, England earned an honours undergraduate degree from the University of London, a Masters Degree in Mechanical Engineering from the University of Leeds, and his medical degree from the University of Toronto. That was followed by specialty training in physical medicine and rehabilitation at Queen's University in Kingston, and work at that city's Providence Continuing Care Centre.

He has worked in Germany and England and said he chose Canada because it has the best health system in the world.

"I came to Canada to study medicine. (Health care) is better funded than in Britain,

it's better managed than in the States. There's a two-tier system in Germany. It doesn't work as well as in Canada. Keep the Canadian health care system available to everyone. It's a national treasure."

He said he would never work in the United States where you had to ask if a person had health insurance — or a fat bank account — before treating them.

"I find that, frankly, immoral."

Harriss holds patents on knuckle and knee implants and replacements. A third on an adjustable artificial leg for amputees he gave free to the World Health Organization to help victims of landmines and other injuries in the Third World.

The short jaunt to Belleville from Kingston was a natural, Harriss says.

"I've always been a small city (person). I was attracted to Belleville last year. I've always loved the countryside around here."

Harriss says he was also impressed with health services in the area.

"Belleville has excellent physicians."

Harriss splits his work about 50-50 between the rehabilitation clinic in the hospital and private practice. He also spends an afternoon a week teaching, which he says keeps him abreast of new developments in the field.

He and spouse Lili, a senior development officer at Queen's, will continue to live in Kingston, where he indulges his love of motorcycles and plays rugby, a sport known for its toughness and injuries.

"I'm hoping to get a couple of good hits in and (get) some business," Harriss says, laughing.