

# Surfside House

## **Total Health Life Style Centre**

Laser Therapy  
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February 6, 2001

## **RE: Alcohol & Drug Pilot Project**

This letter is given at the request of Mrs. Wendy Van Gerven, Ms. Sheila Sawyer and Mr. Ralph Semple in a letter dated January 15, 2000.

The views expressed in this letter are strictly those of the writer and are not in any way the views of the Nanaimo & District Surfside Society's Board of Directors or of the Society itself.

Laser therapy contacted me in August/September 1999. After listening to their initial briefing, I stated that I would have to brief my Board of Directors with this information and get approval prior to any involvement with Laser Therapy, Surfside Society or our clients. Approval was given by the Board after my briefing.

In December 1999, six of our clients volunteered to participate in a six week Laser Therapy trial at Surfside Recovery House.

All clients were briefed by the Laser Therapy team prior to the commencement so that each client understood what vitamins he would be taking, the number of laser sessions involved, and how often he could (or would) receive his treatment.

Also, our clients would continue with the normal daily routine that all clients go through during the course of six weeks. These include: lectures, presentations, video and audio tapes, group discussions, and one-on-one counseling by our counselors. Further to this, each and every client going thorough Surfside received one-on-one guidance with his Steps One through Step Five.

At startup, there were some concerns by the clients in the area of what they (client) thought or felt what changes they should be experiencing. In short, some clients thought that this was going to be some sort of miracle treatment (i.e. general behavior, headaches gone, general well being, or relieved of their alcohol/drug addiction). In other words, an 'instant cure'.

The staff at Laser Therapy were most patient with all clients in explaining what clients could expect and answered all questions and concerns. When clients requested extra laser

sessions, the Laser Therapy staff would always accommodate the clients (even after hours, or on short notice).

In a residential setting such as Surfside where you have eighteen clients that all come from different lifestyles, cultures and backgrounds, it can become very stressful for the client until he gets to a point in his program where he can concentrate on himself totally. In such a setting, a client can become very annoying to other clients for any number of reasons (i.e. who watches what on TV, who sits where in the living room, who isn't doing his house chore properly, being loud or obnoxious, cleaning up after themselves, respecting other client's property, or attempting to tell other clients how he should do his recovery program).

My point is that there isn't a day where someone makes, or can cause, a very stressful time for another client. They do not always do this on purpose, but because they are now in an area where they can not use alcohol or drugs to hide feelings, handle stress, or to deal with any number of underlying issues. Once two clients confront each other, then it can effect all eighteen clients.

Within a few sessions it became very apparent that the six clients involved in the sessions were much more relaxed and were better able to deal with situations that they normally would not of handled well. These six clients were more relaxed, less irritable and more focussed on their program.

When you have a situation where you can enable six clients to be more involved with their program, then this has a positive effect on the other twelve clients in that some of these twelve clients settle down more quickly.

One other area of improvement was that their sleep habits improved (i.e. a good solid night's rest – approx. 7 to 8 hours which resulted in being in a more cheerful mood, and more apt to completing assigned tasks). Also, these six clients were more alert in our classroom, and home assignments completed.

It was also noted that most of these six clients would use the pressure points (as shown by the Laser Therapy staff) on their hands and heads to relax themselves whenever they came to an uptight or stressful situation.

The initial six clients had been in our program for some time, approximately seven to fourteen days so would be fully detoxed. Therefore, I believe they would not be experiencing any signs of detoxing (i.e. stomach cramps, diarrhea, nausea, sweating and muscle aches).

In late January/early February 2000, there were four other clients involved in the Laser Therapy program. Three of these four clients had similar results that the initial six clients had (i.e. more relaxed, less moody, and better concentration). The fourth client was in fact, detoxing for the initial seven to ten days. Once detoxed, he became more relaxed, but there was little change in his concentration or improvement on his moods. This client in fact, did not do well with Laser Therapy due to other problems that can not be discussed in this letter.

It is my opinion that Laser Therapy was a considerable help to nine out the ten clients who went through these trials by improvements in their habits. This had a positive effect on some of our other clients.

Although most of these clients have left the immediate area and I am unable to state if they are still clean and sober, I still know of three that are clean and sober.

If the opportunity arose again to work with the Laser Therapy staff, I would certainly do so.

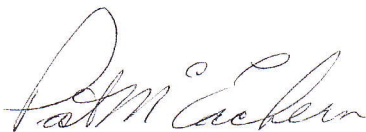
In closing, I would suggest that if another Laser Therapy session took place at Surfside, the questionnaires would be completed by the clients prior to the commencement of a session so that we could monitor the progress of each client.

I feel that the Laser Therapy staff of Sheila, Wendy and Ralph were very knowledgeable in their field. I found them to be very polite, extremely helpful, and very professional in all our dealings.

I would like to thank you for giving me the opportunity of being involved in this project and working in a new area. A special thank you to Sheila for answering (and sometimes, re-answering) my questions and for always being there for our clients.

Any further questions or inquiries, please contact the undersigned.

Yours truly,



Pat McEachern  
Managing Director