

# TriCorner News

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## **A diagnostic doctor who takes a nontraditional path**

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- [North Canaan](#)

By

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Robin Russell, ND, will open a medical practice focusing on women and children on Oct. 13.  
*Photo Submitted*

NORTH CANAAN — Robin Russell will open a pediatric and women's naturopathic healthcare clinic here next week at 176 Ashley Falls Road (sharing a building with Ramunni & Riiska accounting).

Earlier this week, she took a break from setting up shop in the sparkling clean offices on the first floor to talk about her new practice. A children's play corner set up in the waiting room and a baby scale outside the exam rooms await her smallest patients.

The Torrington native returned from the West Coast after completing medical school, opening a successful practice, marrying and starting a family. She and her husband, Michael Russell, have a 10-year-old daughter and a 5-year-old son.

"My whole family is in Torrington," she said. "It was time to come back. We moved to Torrington almost two years ago."

Taking on women and children as a specialty is a somewhat unique approach in this area.

While at Bastyr University in Washington state, she discovered that she particularly enjoyed helping women and children. She trained extensively in pediatrics, and realized the best approach was to include the mothers.

"For instance, I may find a nursing baby's issues have to do with the mom. I have to treat the mom in order to treat the baby."

Russell is a naturopathic doctor (ND), which differs from an medical doctor (MD) in that their educations take slightly different paths when it comes to treatment. The focus for an ND is on alternative medicine, such as botanicals, supplements and nutrition, even massage and chiropractic manipulation, while MDs focus more on traditional Western medical teachings and on pharmacology.

That's not to say Russell can't or won't write a prescription for medications. She did that often at her busy practice in the Seattle area. Antibiotics and other drugs may be called for right off, depending on how sick the patient is. In other cases, naturopathic remedies are prescribed. A child that presents with an ear infection with mild symptoms may be treated with an antimicrobial oil, for example.

"If the weekend is approaching, I might give the parent a prescription for an antibiotic that they can fill if the symptoms get worse," she said.

For Russell, it is not about resisting what has become a more traditional approach, but about looking for the best way to treat each patient.

Her commitment to being a doctor was solidified by a careful process of finding herself. After completing her undergraduate studies in biology and chemistry at Plymouth State University in New Hampshire, she took a year off and taught chemistry at Holy Cross High School in Waterbury, Conn.

“I loved the job — and I didn’t realize how much work goes into teaching high school chemistry. It was a great experience, but it also encouraged me to follow my dream of becoming a doctor.”

Back in her home state, she decided to join an existing practice, and worked in the Hartford area until that little voice called her to set up her own office in the region she knows best.

The difference here is that she cannot be a primary care physician or write prescriptions. An ND is considered a specialist in Connecticut. So while her services are covered by most insurance and she will see patients for routine checkups, including gynecological exams, she focuses on acute and chronic health care. That includes allergies, ADHD, infertility, digestive problems, colic, rashes, asthma and autism, just to name a few.

She loves being a detective and getting to the bottom of what ails her patients. She is well-trained in diagnostics, using traditional bloodwork and imaging, genetic evaluation and alternative testing when indicated to identify the cause of the patient’s symptoms or disease. Patients are invited to call for appointments beginning Oct. 13 at 860-453-4090. For more information, go to [www.naturalpediatricmedicinellc.com](http://www.naturalpediatricmedicinellc.com).