

## On the Net

### Outfitting a medical office online

These days doctors can outfit their offices from the comfort of a computer terminal because medical cyberstores are multiplying to serve the Canadian market for medical equipment. American companies still dominate this area, but a solid list of Canadian sites is now run by Yahoo ([ca.yahoo.com/regional/countries/canada/business\\_and\\_economy/companies/health/medical\\_equipment/](http://ca.yahoo.com/regional/countries/canada/business_and_economy/companies/health/medical_equipment/)).

Blacklock Medical Products ([www.blacklock.com](http://www.blacklock.com)) of Delta, BC, markets medical-grade adhesives and phototherapy equipment, while Canadian Medical Products ([www.canmedprod.com](http://www.canmedprod.com)) in Scarborough, Ont., offers a range of products that includes pain-management stimulator units and complementary accessories such as ultrasound gel.

Crossing the border, you can surf to Hospital Associates ([www.mediquip.net](http://www.mediquip.net)) in Anaheim, California, and order everything from a cast-cutting saw to crutches. Medical EquipNet ([www.solumed.com](http://www.solumed.com)), another online sales site, also lets you sell used equipment.

When it is time to buy office supplies, you can choose between big-name suppliers such as Office Max ([www.officemax.com](http://www.officemax.com)) or Staples ([staples.com](http://staples.com)) and smaller in-

dependent companies like Camcosupplies.com ([www.camcosupplies.com](http://www.camcosupplies.com)).

With all this Web surfing, your computer will be an essential item. The Apple Store ([store.apple.com](http://store.apple.com)) has been selling a complete line of Macintosh computers online for years, as has Dell Computer ([www.dell.com](http://www.dell.com)) and others like IBM ([commerce.www.ibm.com](http://commerce.www.ibm.com)).

Finally, several companies specifically market software for doctors' offices. These include Avio Corp. ([www.avio.com](http://www.avio.com)), which provides advanced information technology for physician practice management, and MedicaLogic ([www.medicallogic.com](http://www.medicallogic.com)), which offers an electronic patient-record system. MedServe Link ([www.medservelink.com](http://www.medservelink.com)) markets its business management software to doctors, while Sunquest Information Systems ([www.sunquest.com](http://www.sunquest.com)) has a software suite aimed at hospitals, laboratories and pharmacies. Pointshare ([www.pointshare.com](http://www.pointshare.com)) develops and manages medical intranet services.

With all these online choices, doctors wanting to outfit a new practice may never have to step outside the door again to go shopping. — *Michael O'Reilly*, [mike@oreilly.net](mailto:mike@oreilly.net)

### Canadians attract \$17 million in xenotransplant funding

Flush with \$17 million in recent funding, a team of xenotransplant researchers from London, Ont., is seeking new ways to modify pig organs genetically for grafting into humans and to induce tolerance in the immune systems of recipients. Few areas of research are as controversial, because many people are concerned about the potential for cross-species transfer of pathogens.

The London Transplant Research Team's 2-pronged approach to the problem of cross-species rejection is rapidly establishing the Southwestern Ontario city as a major centre for xenotransplant research. Earlier this month, the Ontario Government announced \$5.7 million in funding from the Ontario Research and De-

velopment Challenge Fund. This added to previous commitments from the John P. Robarts Research Institute and private-sector partners. The team is a partnership of the London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC), the Robarts Research Institute, the University of Western Ontario and 6 companies.

Xenotransplantation "has the potential to relegate kidney dialysis machines to the museum, where they will collect dust with iron-lung machines," said Dr. William Wall, director of the LHSC's transplant program ([www.lhsc.on.ca/transplant/](http://www.lhsc.on.ca/transplant/)). The London team hopes to attract 15 clinical fellows and 70 graduate students to work on the program. It is also seeking applicants for a new chair

in xenotransplantation. Jim Wilson, Ontario's minister of energy, science and technology, expressed hope that the London project "might even repatriate people who have gone to the US for work."

Dr. Robert Zhong, director of experimental surgery at the UWO and president of the International Society for Experimental Microsurgery, told *CMAJ* that transplants of porcine organs into humans are at least 2 years away in London. He wants to see an 80% survival rate over 6 months in pig-to-baboon trials before further experimentation on humans. London currently holds the record for survival of pig-to-baboon kidney grafts — 40 days. — *Dave Helwig*, London, Ont.