

# Dr Todd Pesek, MD

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Physician | Professor | Ethnobotanist | Author | Explorer | Earth Healer

## Executive Bio

Dr Todd Pesek, MD is a trailblazing integrative, holistic physician, ethnobotanist, and professor specializing in disease prevention, longevity, and culturally rooted models of sustainable health and wellness. With over two decades of international fieldwork and medical practice, Dr Pesek has studied traditional healing systems and ethnobotany extensively in Belize, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Appalachia, Africa, India, Amazonia, the Andean highlands, the Baltic and beyond. He is the founder and president of VitalHealth Partners, Chief Medical Officer of Heinen's Grocery Stores, and Medical Director to Fortune 200 company and others.

Dr Pesek's work blends modern science with ancestral knowledge, creating a rare model of translational health innovation that includes groundbreaking medical practice, bestselling books, empowering corporate wellness platforms, and award-winning superfood, supplement, and nutraceutical brands with innovative, science-backed ingredients. His research and teaching focus on the synergy between traditional medicine rooted in plants and integrative medical practice and science, with a commitment to community empowerment, ecological stewardship, and food as medicine.

## Contact and Social

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Google Scholar: <https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=ybdJWf4AAAAJ&hl=en&oi=ao>

Research Gate: [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Todd-Pesek?ev=hdr\\_xprf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Todd-Pesek?ev=hdr_xprf)

## Summary

Physician-scholar and thought leader in preventive, integrative, holistic medicine with 20+ years of international research and translational practice experience. Specializes in disease prevention, longevity & vital living, and culturally relative models of health and wellness. Professor with tenure, extensively published author, first ever Chief Medical Officer of a grocery chain, Medical Director to Fortune 200 company and others, and founder of multiple clinical and product innovation platforms. Equally at home in rainforest healing ceremonies, clinical practice, field and forest, academic symposiums, and national/international media.

## Education & Training

- Residency, Internal Medicine, Case Western Reserve University / St. Vincent Charity
- MD The Ohio State University College of Medicine and Public Health / Cleveland Clinic, Sherman and Frances Battles Johnson Scholar
- BS Biochemistry, Northeastern University, Magna Cum Laude, Honors Degree
- Additional: Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence at MIT; Academic Leadership Program at Cleveland State University; Clinical Research Fellowship in Neurosciences and Neurosurgery at Cleveland Clinic; Clinical Research in Geographic Medicine at Case Western Reserve University, School of Medicine

## Academic Appointments

- Associate Professor (with Tenure), Health Sciences & Human Performance, Cleveland State University
- Founding Director, Center for Healing Across Cultures, Cleveland State University

## Medical Appointments

- Founder & President, VitalHealth Partners (Private Integrative Medical Practice)
- Chief Medical Officer, Heinen's Grocery Store (First CMO of a grocery chain in the U.S.)
- Medical Director, Step Change Innovations; Medical Director, Lighthouse Sciences & former Medical Director at Parker Hannifin (Fortune 300)

## Research & Fieldwork

- Principal Investigator in traditional healing, ethnobotany, and phytotherapy
- Founder & Director, Rapid Ethnobotanical Survey (RES) & Maya Mountains Ethnobotany & Ecology Project (MMEEP)

- Founding partner of the Itzamma Project – a Maya healer-led garden and integrative health project via traditional healing in Belize (This model has since been replicated in India, Amazonia, Appalachia and Costa Rica)
- Led over 100 field expeditions to Central America, Appalachia, India, Africa, Amazonia, the Andes, the Baltic and beyond

## Major Publications

- BESTSELLER: *Eat Yourself Super—One Bite at a Time* (Morgan-James, 2012)
- Authored *Sickness and Healing in The Commonality of Humans Through Art—How art connects mankind through the ages* (Paul Holberton Publishing, London, UK, 2024)
- Featured subject of *Grocery* by Michael Ruhlman (Abrams, 2017)
- *Healing Across Cultures & The Good Life* (Cengage Learning, 2010)
- Dozens of peer-reviewed journal articles on longevity, integrative medicine, validation of traditional healing knowledge, ethnobotany, sustainability, and artificial intelligence in healthcare in leading journals such as: *Phytochemistry*, *EcoHealth*, *HerbalGram*, *J. Ethnopharmacology*, *Sustainability*, *Economic Botany*, *Heritage*, *Botany*, *EXPLORE: The Journal of Science & Healing* and more

## Awards & Honors

- Over \$2.7 million in external research funding from World Bank, IDRC, CIET, and corporate partners
- United Nations Conference on Health and Biodiversity, Closing Plenary
- Named keynote and featured speaker at international conferences across four continents
- Bestselling book distribution exceeding 50,000+ copies regionally to practice alone; 100K+ wellness program subscribers
- SigmaXi—The Scientific Research Honor Society, Member

## Brand & Product Innovation

- Nutritional Roots – Award-winning superfoods and supplements line
- Wellwerks – Functional foods + nutraceuticals line
- Lighthouse Sciences – Premium medical cannabis line (leading brand in Ohio)
- Coral Roots Farm (Costa Rica) – Regenerative agriculture + plant sourcing

## Courses Taught

- Physiology, Pathology, Pharmacology, Hematology, Neurosciences

## Specialty Courses Taught

- Human Nutrition (Medical Student Cohorts; *Eat Yourself Super—One Bite at a Time*, Main Text)
- Culture & Healthcare (Culturally Relative Healthcare Emphasis)
- Environmental Health (Human and Environmental Health Intersection & Sustainability Emphasis)
- Complementary & Alternative Medicine (Integrative Medicine Emphasis)
- Healing Across Cultures: Learning from Traditions; Secrets of Long Life, Longevity & Vital Living; Plants People & Global Healing (Ethnobotany & Phytomedicine)

## Media & Outreach (Recent/Impactful)

- Featured in Food as Medicine, Organic Spa Magazine: The Art of Well Being, (Bookazine, Spring 2025)
- Featured in Grocery (Ruhlman, Abrams Press)
- Large venue speaking engagements/keynotes internationally at the United Nations, Green Festival, GA 2023, LOHAS, Expo East, Expo West, Coop America Green Business Festival etc.
- Collaborations with Cleveland State University, Heinen's Grocery Stores, Parker Hannifin, and global healing networks

## Licensure

- State Medical Board of Ohio, License #35.091001

## Leisurely Pursuits

- Longevity and vital living inspired by the wisdom of elders, culture, and the natural world. Hiking and trail running, soulful travel, and time spent in forests and mountains. Spring water expeditions and conversations that nourish curiosity—often through podcasts and writing. Healthful cooking and gathering around the table; I love feeding people good food and sharing meals in community. Daily movement practices including strength training, sauna and cold immersion. Lifelong martial artist practicing Wing Chun, Yang-style Tai Chi, and Ashtanga Yoga. And perhaps most joyfully, sharing my lifelong passion for skateboarding with my children—a proud “Thrasher” at heart.