

Neighbor



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BY BUD BLAKE

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Smoking habits get zapped

Hotel pays for laser treatment to help three employees quit

BY AMES BOYKIN
Daily Herald Staff Writer

They've tried it all before: the gum, the patch and just good old-fashioned cold turkey. But they ended up lighting up again.

For the Great American Smokeout, a national effort to get people to quit smoking, their employer, the Westin O'Hare Hotel, offered to pay for a laser treatment to help three employees end their addiction to smoking.

Westin sponsored the complimentary treatments for its workers to encourage healthy lifestyles. The hotel went smoke-free last January.

So, these three employees have tried again in the hopes of finally kicking the habit.

John Wayne, 29, of Marengo, Andrea John, 33, of Des Plaines and Rick Nickle, 29, of Lake in the Hills all began smoking in their teens. They spend about \$2,000 a year on cigarettes.

Acculaser Therapy LLC, which has offices in Chicago, Northbrook, Hillside and Waukegan, gave each of them the \$289 procedure.

Wayne said he wanted to "feel better."

He recently became a Marengo firefighter, so he wanted to get in better shape. Wayne said he has the strength,



Pressure points in the ear are treated with a laser to stimulate endorphins helping patients stop smoking.

but he loses his breath too often.

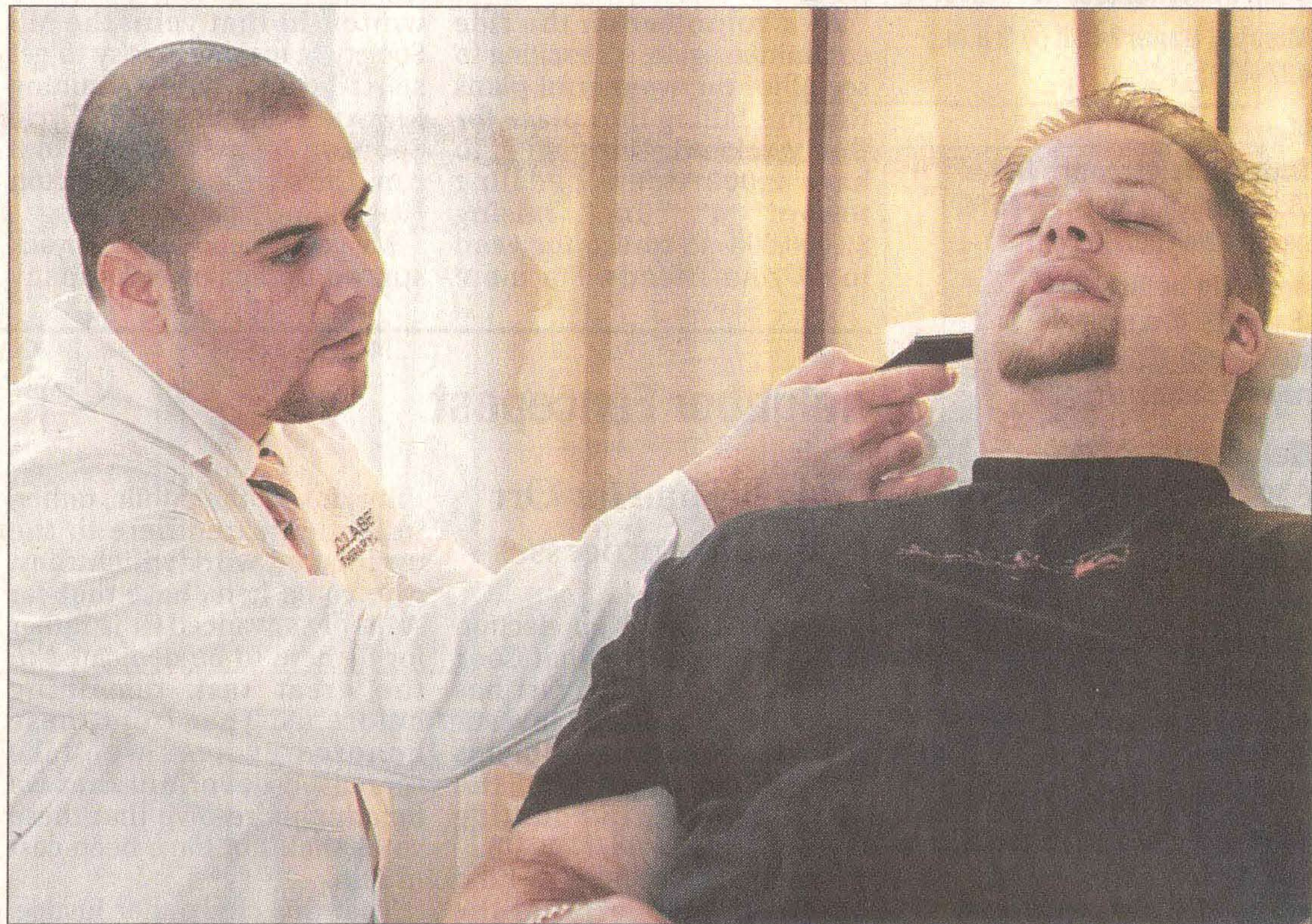
When he became an engineer at the Westin in Rosemont a decade ago, Wayne started smoking more regularly. It was a good way to take a break during the work day.

In a Westin hotel room, Marco Catanese, president of Acculaser, had Wayne lie down while he used a laser on various pressure points. The procedure took about an hour. He must hit various pressure points in the ear, face, hand and legs.

It feels like a pinprick, Catanese tells his patients.

The laser stimulates the nerves, producing those "feel good" endorphins that help fend off the nicotine cravings.

Endorphins increase for up to a month after the treatment, helping those trying to quit by replacing the temporary good feeling they get when they



PHOTOS BY MARK BLACK/mblack@dailyherald.com

Marco Catanese, president of Acculaser Therapy LLC, gives John Wayne of Marengo, a Westin O'Hare Hotel employee, laser treatment to help him stop smoking.

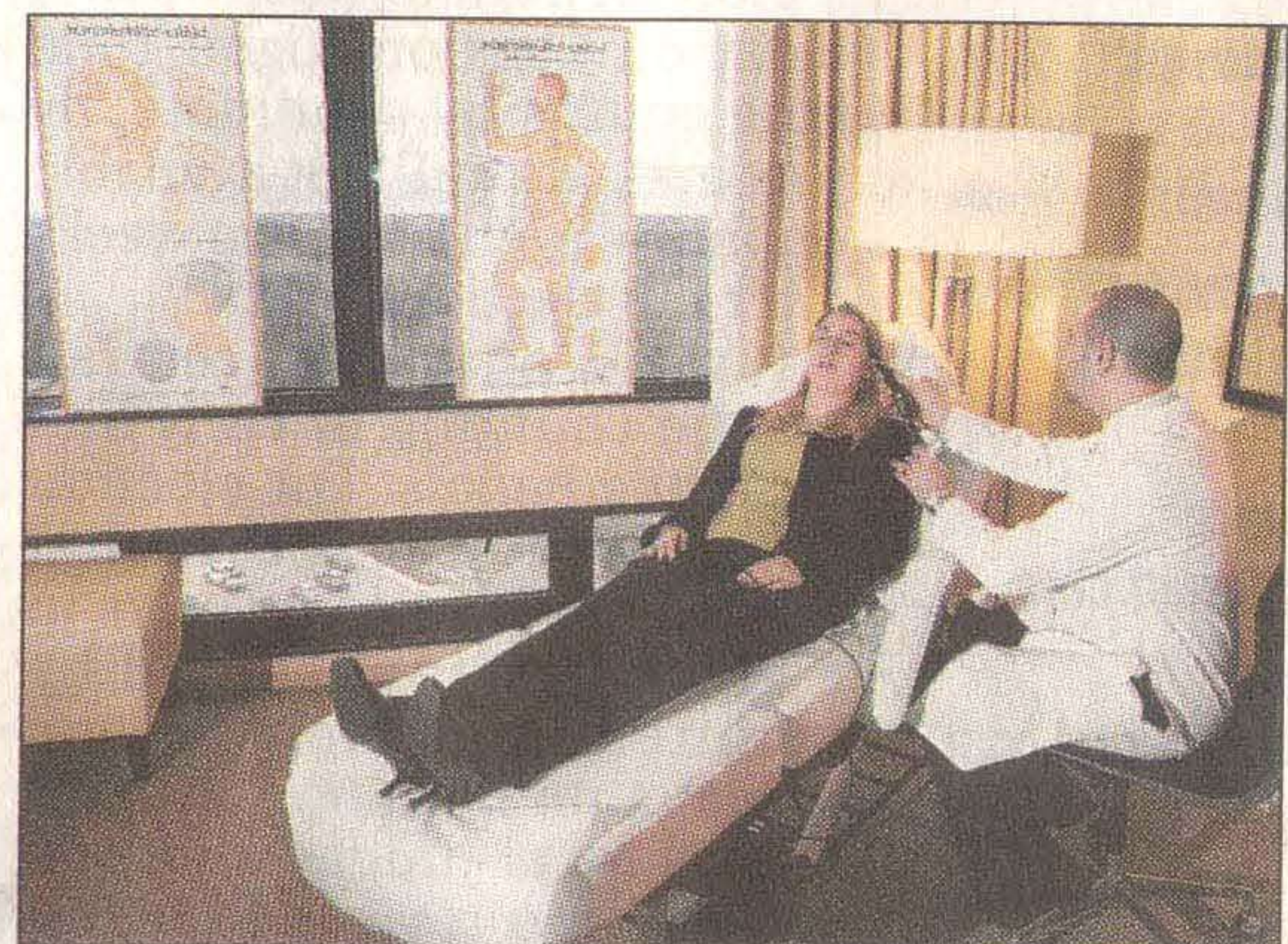
smoke.

"They get that nice relaxing feeling. That's the body producing endorphins," Catanese said. "When you're feeling better, it's easier to fight the craving."

As for the oral fixation habit, Catanese suggests reaching for some sugar-free gum or carrot sticks.

John needs her first cigarette about a half-hour after waking up. During her treatment, John

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Andrea John of Des Plaines hopes the laser treatment will end her cigarette habit.

Zap: Workers had tried to quit smoking

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immediately began feeling relaxed.

"I feel like a 'body buzz,'" she said.

John, who works in Westin's sales department, has tried to quit, but it never stuck. When her

boss mentioned the complimentary laser treatment, she found a new aid in her quest to end the habit. Nickle, who works in the hotel's sales department, felt the same.

"I've wanted to quit for about 10 years," Nickle said.

And if they feel on the verge of

a lapse?

They can get a \$100 "booster" shot to keep those endorphin levels up.

But if they actually do lapse, they will need to re-do the treatment, Catanese said.

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