



# TREASURE COAST DERMATOLOGY

*Specializing in the Treatment of Skin Cancer*

January 6, 2014

## DEAR FRIENDS:

Over a decade ago, I began writing a yearly letter to my patients.

I do this to keep everyone apprised about what's going on with our practice, share some personal experiences, and announce the date and time of our annual picnic.

This year, **our picnic will be held on ~~Saturday, February 8th,~~ between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. at Tradition Field (527 NW Peacock Blvd. Port St. Lucie, FL 34986).**

We hope to see you there.

On a personal note, as many of you know, my mother was diagnosed with cancer in December of 2012 and passed away on May 1st.

When my mother was first diagnosed with her cancer, it had already spread to her lungs. She decided not to have chemotherapy as there was no chance of cure.

My mother died on a Wednesday morning, peacefully, in the house where she had raised her family, with her son and daughter by her side.

Many of you have sent prayers and good wishes. I am grateful to have such good people in my life.

On a happier note, my wife Cammy and I welcomed our son, George Craig Ioannides, into this world on June 29th, 2013. He was healthy at 7lbs, 2 ounces. He is named after his grandfathers. My father was George and my wife's father is Craig.

His 2 year old sister is still getting used to him, but she is now kissing him on the forehead each morning.

My wife and our entire family are doing well.

## ON TO SOME PRACTICE NEWS:

As I mentioned in last year's letter, **Dr. Cynthia Golomb**, who has been part of the TCD family for many years, began seeing patients in some of our Treasure Coast office locations.

It's hard to believe that a year has passed since Dr. Golomb joined us in this area. She is doing well, and her positive reputation in the community continues to grow.

Dr. Golomb is double Board Certified in Dermatology and Dermatopathology. She is also a Voluntary Associate Professor at the University of Miami School of Medicine, where she assists in training future dermatologists.

We are very glad to have her here in this more active role. Please take the opportunity to try and meet her at the picnic.

## NOW ON TO SOME BUSINESS:

Over the years, many Health Maintenance Organizations and Medicare Advantage plans have come and gone in our area. Several of them have made offers to network with us because of the wide range of offices we have. Since I have been in practice, I have never been dropped by any health care organization.

This has changed.

This past July, I was informed by UnitedHealthcare that they were amending our contract to exclude our participation in their Medicare Advantage products for 2014 due to "the significant changes and pressures in the healthcare environment."

Certainly, UnitedHealthcare was able to do this.

Our attempt to appeal to UnitedHealthcare was unsuccessful. Needless to say, we were disappointed with this result.

We understand changing health plans and doctors can be time consuming and worrisome.

It is my opinion that a limited provider network hurts a patient's ability to obtain excellent health care at the physicians' offices of their choosing.

I hear many of my patients complain that when they call their doctor's office with a medical concern, they're often told to go to the emergency room for what seems, to me, to be a minor problem.

If that happened to me or my family (and to tell the truth, it has) I would consider switching doctors.

If a doctor doesn't have enough time to take care of me when I need him or her, well, that's just a little too busy for me.

**Every time you come to Treasure Coast Dermatology, you will see a Board Certified Medical Doctor.**

If you have a dermatologic emergency, I will see you the same day.

I work to give my patients the same courtesy and service I would want my family to have.

This is not the case with all doctors, and it is one reason I limit the medical plans I participate with.

I don't sign up for every plan there is in order to have a three month waiting list, as other providers may.

And here's more: There was a study published some time ago that reported dermatologists in several cities offering faster appointments for people calling with cosmetic requests than for those calling with possible signs of skin cancer. This, in part, is because Botox, collagen, and other cosmetic services are cash money directly in a doctor's pocket. Cosmetic doctors are not going to make you wait to take your money.

I don't have cosmetic brochures in my office pushing Botox and collagen to people who are here for medical treatment. Sure, there's money in cosmetic services, but you're coming to see me for medical problems.

Further, as you may be aware, I have never taken a gift or meal from a drug rep. I'm not going to allow someone to try to convince me their drug is better for my patients just because they buy me and my staff lunch. In the big scheme of things, my "free lunch" is coming out of your pocket – my patients' pockets. Some drug companies spend more on marketing than they do on research.

In addition, I'm not going to keep my patients waiting while a drug rep makes their sales pitch. I will read the studies, go to the lectures, and make decisions about which medications to prescribe on my own time.

These are some of the things I won't allow in my practice. These are some of the things I hope you question in the practices you choose.

I encourage you to ask your medical providers the hard questions.

It's your right. It's your health. Ultimately, it's your decision.

My patients trust me with their health. I will do my best to take care of them and honor that trust.

Best wishes for the new year.

**Sincerely,**

*Tim Ioannides, M.D.*

**TIM IOANNIDES, M.D.**

P.S. There's one last thought I would like to share: As expected, with the changes in our healthcare landscape, there are people who will try to take advantage of retirees, even going door to door using official sounding names to seek private information. They may be trying to take advantage of people in various ways. Please be careful about who you talk to about your medical care and finances.