



TREASURE COAST DERMATOLOGY

Specializing in the Treatment of Skin Cancer

September 2, 2014

Board Certified Dermatologists

Martin, St. Lucie, and Indian River Counties

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DEAR NEIGHBOR:

Going to the doctor can be a scary thing. Besides all of the paperwork, talking about and dealing with health issues can be intimidating. Even minor medical problems can be a sign of something more. Skin cancer, especially, can look to the untrained eye like an innocent mole.

In 1999, I started Treasure Coast Dermatology to help people with these difficulties, and more importantly, to be there for patients and put them first.

"If my Mother had skin cancer..." became part of the philosophy of my practice.

I tailored my offices specifically to help people in the Medicare age bracket. In these times when Medicare is disparaged and there are cutbacks left and right, these are the people I felt I could help most. People like my Mother.

I was very close to both of my parents, but my Mom, as strong as she was, depended on me for many things. When I went to doctors' offices with her, I was sometimes disappointed in the way my colleagues approached things.

I have always wanted my practice to be different.

Embracing this philosophy meant two things: what would I want for my Mother, and what wouldn't I want for her if she called my office.

If my Mother needed to see me as an established patient, I wouldn't want her to wait. If she had an emergency, she could come right in. If she was concerned about a mole or something she might worry was a skin cancer, I would see her that same week, if not that day.

If my Mother needed medical attention, I would want her doctor to be educated in the best treatment options with the highest possible cure rates. I would want that doctor to be able to provide those treatments.

If my Mother called my office, I wouldn't want her greeted by a recording telling her to "push button 1" or "select option 2" only to have to leave a message anyway. I would want a person to pick up the phone - someone who could help her right then and there.

My Mother went to the doctor to take care of her health issues. She liked to look nice but didn't want to walk into an office where they would tell her, because of her age, she needed Botox, or collagen, or some expensive wrinkle cream.

Business management experts say dermatologists should try to "maximize the income stream" from each patient by trying to sell them cosmetics when they come in for a skin check. They also say offering these cosmetic services shouldn't interfere with patients getting appointments for their medical problems, but I've heard of the exact opposite happening.

My Mother understood the importance of regular checkups by physicians who were focused on her medical concerns. She would not want to be told to go to an emergency room because her doctor's schedule was simply too full. I believe many of my patients feel the same way.

In addition, my Mother wouldn't want to be told that she needed Botox. She used to say, "I'm proud of my wrinkles. I've earned every one of them." As one of her children, I'm probably responsible for at least a couple of those wrinkles.

I don't sell cosmetics in my office. There are so many different treatments for skin cancer and other innovations in medical dermatology. By focusing my attention on medical dermatology, I think I do a better job of taking care of the problems that my patients come to see me about.

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Further, I would want my Mother to visit a clean, organized office, where people were available to help with the many complicated aspects of medical care. I would want her to see a doctor, not an assistant, someone who is Board Certified in his or her specialty. I would want that doctor to be experienced. I would want that doctor, and their staff, to be kind and compassionate.

It is my opinion that attention to detail is one of the things that separates Treasure Coast Dermatology from other practices. Whether it's helping you navigate your insurance, explaining some of the complicated medical procedures that we do, or simply helping you make appointments for the doctors I refer you to, we do it.

I hold myself and my staff to a higher standard. My Mother raised me that way.

I am Board Certified in Dermatology by the American Board of Dermatology. I serve as a Voluntary Associate Professor in the Department of Dermatology at the University of Miami School of Medicine. There, I teach young physicians skin cancer surgery.

These young doctors are smart, ambitious, and love to show up their professors by challenging them. Sure, traveling to Miami takes a lot of time, and fighting the traffic doesn't make it easier, but teaching keeps me honest. If I can't keep up with what's going on in our medical schools, I'm not doing the best job I can.

Teaching also shows the value of experience. I have been treating skin cancer and medical dermatologic problems on the Treasure Coast for many years. When I first came out of my training, like many new doctors, I thought I was a hot shot. Experience has humbled me, made me a better doctor, and has opened my eyes and my heart.

When I started my training as a resident in dermatology, I walked out of a patient's room with one of my well-known professors and I was shaking my head. He asked me if something was wrong, and I told him, "I don't see what you see. You look at patients and see signs of illnesses, skin cancers, in seconds. I'm not getting it."

I told him maybe I should go into some other field.

He smiled at me and said this: "Tim, with your own eyes you have to see ten thousand patients before you start to understand dermatology. You have to see tens of thousands more before you can call yourself a dermatologist. And you'll never stop learning."

Ten thousand sounded like a lot, but we were residents working twelve hours a day, sometimes seven days a week. I saw one patient every half hour. I saw a thousand patients in my first six weeks. As residents, we would pull each other into our colleagues' rooms to discuss interesting cases. And slowly, over three years, I became a dermatologist.

In my specialty, I think the subtleties and wide variety in the appearance of skin cancer need the eye of a Board Certified Dermatologist.

I've been lucky to be working with someone who shares my ideals about practicing medicine. For ten years, Dr. Cynthia Golomb has been working with Treasure Coast Dermatology as a dermatopathologist. She is double Board Certified in Dermatology and Dermatopathology. For the past year, she has been seeing patients in our Port St. Lucie and Stuart offices.

So why am I writing this letter? If you are someone who wants a caring office with well-trained doctors on staff to take care of your medical problems in dermatology, then Treasure Coast Dermatology is a place where you can come.

I hope, if you do need to see a dermatologist, you will know that we are here to take care of you.

Sincerely,

Tim Ioannides, M.D.

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