

Advertising Feature

# Prayer and Great Medical Care Beat COVID-19 at 106 Years Old

Minnie McRae knows first-hand that the purpose of Gonzaba Medical Group is much more than patient care. At 106 years old, she just beat COVID-19.

From the time Dr. Bill Gonzaba opened the doors of his one-room clinic on the Southside of San Antonio on South Flores Street more than 60 years ago, he believed the relationship between doctor and patient is a sacred bond of trust. Patients—like Ms. Minnie—are *como familia*.

“In most primary care clinics, a patient is just a name or a number or a symptom,” says Dr. Bill. “At our medical group, our doctors get to know the patient, and by doing so, we’re able to deliver the highest quality of patient care. All of our patients are treated *como familia*—like family—and that includes creating opportunities for our patients and their families to actively engage with their providers in the healing and wellness process.”

That philosophy of personal connection between doctor and patient has made Gonzaba Medical Group one of the largest, independent, physician-owned medical practices in Texas, with three medical centers offering comprehensive care, four clinics, a Specialty Center, and 80-plus providers specializing in complete senior care in San Antonio and South Texas.

The medical group delivers care in line with the “Triple Aim” framework: improving the patient experience, improving the quality of health in communities, and reducing the rising cost of health care. The outcome is what Gonzaba Medical Group is nationally recognized for - delivering value-based health care that is patient centered.



But to Minnie, it all comes down to *confianza*—trust—and she believes the care, compassion, and relationship she has with her doctor—Manuel Martinez—made all the difference in her battle with COVID-19.

“I trust Gonzaba completely,” she says. “When I was sick, Dr. Martinez was really worried about me. He called me; he sent things to my house to help me. He is so kind and takes such good care of me.”

“She is *como familia*, a special lady to me, and I wanted to make sure I did everything possible to help her recover from COVID-19,” Dr. Martinez says.

Minnie’s story is, indeed, special. She was born at Mission Espada on the southside in 1914 and lived near the mission until the age of 103. She moved in with her daughter, Mary Jo, who helps her mother manage the tasks of everyday living, including taking her to her appointments at Gonzaba Medical Group.

“I am so grateful to have the help of Gonzaba Medical Group. They have complete care, all of the medical services in one place. I don’t have to go all over town for my mother’s medical care.”  
Mary Jo, Daughter of Minnie

Minnie has been a patient of Gonzaba for so long that neither she nor Mary Jo can remember how long. But their best guess is more than 40 years.



“I just feel so at home here at Gonzaba,” Minnie says.

That feeling of family and confidence was critically important to her when she, Mary Jo, and Mary Jo’s daughter all contracted COVID-19.

“I was most worried about my mother,” Mary Jo says. “But I would call Dr. Martinez whenever I had a question or needed anything. I didn’t hold back. And Dr. Martinez would always call me back. Being able to talk to the doctor makes so much difference.”

Accessibility to medical care during a pandemic like COVID-19 can be a challenge for many clinics, but Gonzaba Medical Group has led the way in maintaining the highest level of care during this challenging time. Patient surveys rank Gonzaba Medical Group as five out of five stars in COVID-19 preparedness.

And Gonzaba has long been a leader in using health care technology like telehealth to manage the care of its patients. As the scope of the pandemic rapidly grew, Gonzaba Medical Group expanded its accessibility to virtual clinical visits by phone or computer.

Just this year, Gonzaba Medical Group opened its newest clinic in the iconic and historic Avenida Guadalupe district, providing easy access to care in an area with one of the highest concentrations of seniors in the city. This new 5,000-square-foot facility



houses three primary care physicians and even an Event Center. The Gonzaba Event Centers will connect the senior community to wellness activities such as dance, exercise, nutrition and educational opportunities like computer classes. This Guadalupe Clinic joins three others in the North Central, Southeast, and Downtown areas.

Last year, Gonzaba Medical Group opened a stand-alone Specialty Center where Dr. Martinez serves as the medical director. This center was created to further enhance the coordination between specialty and primary care. Coordinated care such as this improves patients’ health outcomes. Gonzaba offers in-house specialties such as endocrinology, rheumatology, podiatry, hematology/oncology, wound care, infectious disease, and clinical dermatology. In an effort to promote preventative care, they also offer specialty services such as diabetes management and pain/wellness programs. The Specialty Center also lessens the travel burden on patients, like Minnie, who often rely on family for transportation.

The Specialty Center supports the three comprehensive medical centers—the Main Medical Center on Pleasanton Road serving South San Antonio, the Northwest Medical Center, just off I-410 on Culebra Road, and the Woodlawn Medical Center serving surrounding neighborhoods in the Woodlawn Lake area. The focus at the medical centers is on complete care under one roof.

Gonzaba’s three urgent care centers at those medical center locations are the only San Antonio-based facilities to achieve accreditation and the Gold Seal from the Joint Commission, the nation’s most respected independent evaluation agency. Overall, **Gonzaba Medical Group** is among the highest-ranked clinics nationally by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

All of this supports the most important mission of the Gonzaba Medical Group: taking the best care possible of its patients like Minnie.

Today, Minnie, her daughter, and her granddaughter have all recovered from COVID-19 and are doing well. Minnie says she attributes her recovery to the excellent care she received at Gonzaba Medical Group under the watchful eye of Dr. Martinez and to the power of prayer.

“When I have a problem, I pick up the crucifix, and I talk to God,” Minnie says. “I get up at 5 o’clock, and I start praying for my family. Then I pray for the sick and suffering everywhere.”

And she does have some general advice for living a life that so far has taken her on a 106-year journey:

“Live by prayer,” Minnie says. “You won’t regret it. And no arguing. If someone wants to argue with you, leave them standing there talking to themselves.”

