

Gonzaba Medical Group Celebrates its 60th Anniversary with Their Patients Support



In 1961, Margarita Valdez suffered a bite while swimming in the Texas Gulf Coast during her honeymoon with her husband, Ernest. Her leg became infected, and three days later, she began looking for a doctor back in San Antonio.

Her father-in-law, a fireman, encouraged her to see “the local firemen’s doctor” because “he’s the best.”

The firemen’s doctor was Dr. Bill Gonzaba, who had opened his medical practice a year earlier after earning his degree from the University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston. Dr. Bill had grown up on the southside of San Antonio, in the Sunny Slope neighborhood, and he felt called to come back to serve his community, which he believed was medically under-served.

“I watched my mother and father, and all our neighbors struggle to get quality healthcare and I saw it as a calling to come back home and do something about it,” said Dr. Bill. “I opened my first office on South Flores, and it was so small people had to wait in their cars for their appointment.”



Since then, the Gonzaba Medical Group has grown into the largest, independent, physician-owned and led medical practice in South Texas. The group today, as it celebrates its 60th anniversary, includes three comprehensive medical centers and four neighborhood clinics with more than 70 physicians and providers and a staff of more than 800. Gonzaba is nationally recognized for consistently delivering the highest quality care at low cost to its primarily senior patients as part of the Medicare managed care model. The Gonzaba group is often cited as having pioneered the healthcare model of the future.

Patients like Margarita Valdez and her entire family have been there every step of the way. Dr. Bill delivered all four of her and Ernest’s children and has served as the steady and trusted care provider for the entire family for almost six decades.

“I have a lot of faith in the Gonzaba family,” says Margarita, who now regularly sees Dr. Tom Gonzaba, Dr. Bill’s son. “Dr. Bill says all the time that he treats people como familia – like family – and it really is true. I put my life in his hands. That’s how much I trust him. Since I first met him 59 years ago, my cousins, my aunts, my mom and dad, everybody comes to Dr. Gonzaba because they know about the care I get here.”

The Valdez family embraced the Gonzaba’s as more than just a medical family.

“I remember when we had a barbecue, when dad would cook brisket, he would always take Dr. Gonzaba some plates,” recalls Ernie, one of the four Valdez sons. “He was like a brother to my dad.”

The “como familia” culture is the principle difference between Gonzaba Medical Group and other medical practices, where patients are too often



treated as just another number or a symptom. Seeing all patients as family is a value that all Gonzaba Medical Group physicians hold dear.

“Dr. Bill and all of the doctors I see always have time to talk and listen,” says Margarita. “Dr. Bill was my pediatrician, my surgeon, even my psychiatrist. Sometimes I would have little problems and he would talk with me and listen, and I would be fine.”

Dr. Bill says taking time to really get to know a patient is the key to helping them live healthier lives.

“We can treat patients for their symptoms but the approach that sets us apart is that we want to help people stay well, stay active, eat right and stay engaged with each other,” says Dr. Bill. “All of our doctors take time with their patients.”

One of the goals of Gonzaba Medical Group is to make it easier for people to stay socially connected and physically active. With three Gonzaba Event Centers, conveniently located on Pleasanton Road, in the historic Guadalupe Cultural Arts ‘District’, and in the heart of the City of Castle Hills, Gonzaba offers a wide range of activities for seniors. From ‘frequent’ dances for seniors to weekly arts and crafts and exercises classes, patients can stay connected with their community and engaged in their own healthcare. To meet the needs of its patients during the COVID-19 pandemic, Gonzaba launched “Connection Wednesday” and “Somos Familia Friday” programs, both as virtual extensions to our Event Center via Facebook. The programs offer health and nutrition tips, arts and crafts, physical activities, and conversations with important community leaders.

There are seven convenient locations throughout the city including three comprehensive medical centers where patients can get the majority of services they need all under one roof – from primary and specialty care, to urgent care, to physical therapy and advanced imaging services. The three medical centers serve the Southside of San Antonio, the Woodlawn community, and Northwest San Antonio. Other convenient locations include clinics serving the southeast, westside, downtown and north central areas of the city.

“I have always appreciated that I can get all the healthcare I need in one place without having to run all over town,” says Margarita.

Sons Ernie, Jimmy, David and Andy, all of whom Dr. Bill delivered at birth, are carrying on the family tradition of depending on the Gonzaba Medical Group for their families’ healthcare.

Ernie remembers the time when all four boys had to have tonsillectomies and Dr. Bill put everybody

in the hospital together and did the four surgeries back to back.

“On the way home, we got stopped by the police,” Ernie recalls. “The officer looked into the back of the car and sees these four boys in pajamas nursing sore throats and he looked at my dad and said, ‘Nope, you look like you’ve got enough trouble’ and he let us go.”

Dr. Bill chuckled as he listened to Ernie recount the story.

“Como familia and confianza,” says Dr. Bill. “Good medicine is about much more than treating a symptom or writing a prescription. That is the way I’ve built our practice from the ground up and all of our doctors and staff believe in the Gonzaba way. It’s what makes the difference. We have experts and other clinics from all over the country coming to see what we do and how we do it. We’re nationally recognized for getting it right. We care about our families and that’s how we are building the healthcare model of the future.”

To learn more about Gonzaba Medical Group call 210-610-4495 or go to www.gonzaba.com ■

