

# Gonzaba Medical Group Leads the Nation In Positively Transforming Medical Care



More than 60 years ago, Dr. Bill Gonzaba made a decision that would positively and forever change the quality and access to medical care in San Antonio's southside neighborhoods and would become nationally known as a "full-risk" health care model. One that holds provider organizations fully accountable for the health outcomes of their patients. This model allows the provider group to be successful only if the patients' health is managed properly.

Dr. Bill grew up in modest circumstances in Sunny Slope on the city's southside. Through hard work and determination, he made his way to the University of Texas Medical Branch where he trained as a family physician and surgeon. On graduation, he came back to his southside neighborhood to bring a higher level of care to those most in need.

"I had watched my own parents and friends of theirs suffer needlessly because of the lack of access they had to medical care," Dr. Bill says. "When I graduated, I wanted to bring quality medical care closer to home for the friends, neighbors and family I grew up with."

His original one-room office on South Flores has today grown into one of the largest primary care and specialty comprehensive medical center and clinical networks in San Antonio, with seven locations. The Gonzaba Medical Group has earned the "gold seal" from The Joint Commission – the most prestigious independent evaluator in the nation – and is among the highest ranked by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA).

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Today, the Gonzaba Medical Group is three comprehensive medical centers – one on the southside, one on the westside and one in the Woodlawn area – and four neighborhood clinics. The group employs more than 700 people and works to ensure that patients can get all necessary primary care and specialty medical services coordinated for the patient at a single place. Recently, recognizing the need to support the full life cycle of patients, Gonzaba launched *La Diferencia* hospice care, which helps individuals and families cope with end-of-life issues.

In addition to its comprehensive medical care, Dr. Bill believes that connecting with the community is necessary to improve the patient-doctor

relationship. This is what makes Gonzaba Medical Group truly unique. This summer, in partnership with the City of San Antonio, UnitedHealthcare and SAWS, free fans were distributed to more than 800 seniors. Four to five times a month, in partnership with the San Antonio Food Bank, free and healthy produce is distributed to nearly 1,000 seniors in need. Each year, Gonzaba partners with The Salvation Army to provide water, shoes and clothes to the homeless in the summer and warm coats and blankets in the winter.

Senior dances, which encourage seniors to be active and social, draw more than 2,500 participants four times a year, and include a free meal. Almost every day, the Gonzaba Event Center on Pleasanton Road provides social and healthy exercise classes. In 2019, First Responder Fridays and free lunches will be offered at the Event Center for police and firefighters.

"Dr. Bill has truly transformed access to high quality healthcare in our community," says San Antonio Councilwoman Rebecca Viagran. "He has made a huge difference in the lives of real people and their families, not only in our city but throughout South Texas."

***The key to Dr. Bill's philosophy of medicine has always been como familia – treat everyone like family.***

"People come to us with their hearts in their hands, asking for our help, looking for our trust," Dr. Bill says. "Everyone of us at the Gonzaba Medical Group must do the right thing, every time, every day, to earn that trust. Every patient we serve is our family. Not to mention, our employees, many of which grew up in the areas we serve come to work happy because they know they are apart of something special. We are all working in unison to serve the patients and the communities in which they live. Our model is such that we provide top-notch care at little to no cost. It's my oath that we will not create an economic burden on our patients to receive this type of care."

His vision is the foundation of what has come to be known as the "patient-centered medical home" – PCMH – where doctors take the time to really get to know the patient and ensure that they get the right care in the right setting by the most appropriate provider. In a manner consistent with the patient's desires and values.

"Medical homes focus on patients even when they're not present at the office," says Patricia Barrett, vice president of product delivery and PCMH for the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). "The team takes a proactive approach to health rather than waiting for patients to show up at the practice when they're sick."

In a patient-centered primary care physician practice, there is rigorous training to ensure physicians and staff consistently deliver coordinated care in a collaborative model. Where outcomes are measured with transparency. The Gonzaba Medical Group meets the highest national standards of the NCQA to be formally recognized as a Patient Centered Medical Home. In addition, the medical group shares the risk in the cost of the patient's care,

and is therefore incentivized to help people stay healthy.

"I really saw something special here in San Antonio," one of the evaluators from The Joint Commission remarked during a visit. "To see what you're doing here in the community, giving back, giving people really first-class care, facilities... I just want you to know we are truly impressed and appreciative of what you are doing here. It is unique what you are doing here."

***"You do what's right for your patients, you do what's right for your community, and you do what's right for your staff."***



Dr. Jordan Grumet, who speaks nationally on healthcare issues, agrees.

"Here at Gonzaba, you guys do things right," he says. You do what's right for your patients, you do what's right for your community, and you do what's right for your staff."

Gonzaba Medical Group is one of the few large independent medical practices remaining in the U.S. that was founded by a physician and still remains a physician-led organization instead of being owned by a corporation. On average, Gonzaba Medical Group physicians spend more than three times as much time with each patient when compared to the national average. And, research has shown, that when physicians spend more time understanding the complexities of each patient individually, medical outcomes improve.



"I chose to practice at Gonzaba because you can truly feel the difference in the way our medical team collaborates and connects with patients to heal them and help them live healthier lives," says Dr. Ambur Brown. "I am honored that Gonzaba chose me to be part of its team."

