

Eye surgeon sees record number of patients despite pandemic

Gulani emphasizes positivity in face of COVID-19



Dr. Arun Gulani (center, front in blue) celebrates with some of his patients.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

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By Shaun Ryan

Even as COVID-19 forced many physicians to rethink the way they managed the flow of patients at their offices, Dr. Arun C. Gulani didn't have to change much at all.

That's because his eye surgery practice has always emphasized a one-on-one approach.

In fact, while some medical offices have had to reduce the number of patients since March 2000, Gulani actually treated what he calls a "world record": patients flying in from 40 states and 25 countries.

To be sure, Gulani did have to take measures to protect his patients and staff. Masks were worn and surfaces sanitized.

Also, before flying into the area, patients had to be tested in their state or country of origin, and they – as well as Gulani's staff – had to be vaccinated. In fact, Gulani conducted telephone interviews with his patients before they even boarded their planes.

The precautions paid off. None of his patients got infected with COVID-19.

But why did so many patients take the trouble to fly to the First Coast when they could have simply made appointments with doctors in their own neighborhoods?

Gulani has a theory, which he explained during recent teaching sessions in the Far East: Forced to stay home during the pandemic, patients had more time to investigate their options and make informed choices.

“People had more time to research,” Gulani said. “They’re not going to just any doctor because he was available on that day.”

Patients who did their homework discovered that Gulani has been a pioneer in Lasik surgery since the beginning and has trademarked new procedures, such a LaZrPlastique, an improvement over Lasik that can be completed in minutes with no cuts, no blades and no flaps, which can correct nearsightedness, farsightedness, astigmatism and the need for reading glasses.

Another one of Gulani’s trademark procedures is LenzoPlastique, which he says raises cataract surgery “to an artistic level.”

In addition, Gulani operates in a one-of-a-kind cataract spa where patients can relax with music and a light show while he repairs their vision. In fact, he recently did work on a well-known baritone who has sung for six presidents, and the patient was awake, lucid and “enjoying the light show,” Gulani said.

So relaxed was the man that he sang during the surgery.

“I was in his eye, doing his cataract, and he sang ‘Amazing Grace,’” Gulani said. “Can you believe it?”

The owner of Gulani Vision Institute in Jacksonville calls such accounts his “COVID-positives” to counter the negativity many feel in the wake of the pandemic.

Another such COVID-positive story involves a plastic surgeon from Germany, who first read Gulani’s textbook before reaching out. The man had LaZrPlastique performed, as well as another procedure that Gulani has written a book about – “The Sparkle Technique,” whereby red eyes are made bright white.

In November, a woman traveled from Italy for that same procedure as well as Gulani’s trademark M.O.I.S.T. therapy, which corrects dry eye.

Yet another patient had undergone 19 surgeries before finally coming to Gulani.

“He’s 20/20 today,” Gulani said.

Gulani has certainly not been idle during the pandemic, as evidenced not only by the record number of patients but also by the many patents and trademarks he has continued to acquire.

And through it all, he has emphasized the importance of remaining positive, particularly at a time of year when people take note of the blessings they have.

“I feel even though situations outside, like COVID, can be negative, stay positive,” he said. “There’s so much to be thankful for.”