



Dr. Vaidya-Tank (center) with the two certified Physician Assistants who are working with her in the Raleigh Clinic, Waseem Garbia and Mary Katherine Williams.

“We provide guidance for making important lifestyle changes—such as genetic testing to support healthy diets.”

The exceptional qualities of the Family Wellness Clinic in Clayton, which has consistently earned national recognition as a Patient-Centered Medical Home, have now been duplicated and even expanded and strengthened in the new Family Wellness Clinic in Raleigh, notes the founder and medical director, Dr. Bhavna Vaidya-Tank.

“Over nearly a decade, step by step,” she says, “we turned the family medical practice in Clayton into a highly respected model for the delivery of patient care of the highest quality. We certainly aspire to earn that same designation in our more spacious practice setting in Raleigh, which is now open and actively seeing patients. In many respects—physically, philosophically, medically, compassionately—this new practice is a dream come true.

“When I completed my residency many years ago and began the practice of family medicine, from the earliest days I had the sense that something was missing—that our approach to patient care could be more inclusive and thus more effective.

“In Clayton, and now in Raleigh, we have a family practice, for patients from age six, where we can, for example, actually do something about weight issues, that make sense and really work, and where we can use genetic testing to the patient’s advantage.

“In terms of genetic testing,” explains Dr. Vaidya-Tank, “we actually engage in practices that are covered by insurance, that are affordable, that show results for weight loss, for screening for certain cancers, for helping with cardiovascular risk assessment and management, for treating mental health by determining which medications are genetically most appropriate for a patient—all with a simple saliva test. This represents the critically important routine care we provide that is accessible to every single patient. And you don’t have to have thousands of dollars to get this breadth and quality of care.”

FUNCTIONAL MEDICINE SERVICES

“Mary Katherine Williams, a certified Physician Assistant recently introduced in these pages,” says Dr. Vaidya-Tank, “is working with me in the Raleigh practice, along with Waseem Garbia, also a certified Physician Assistant (*see box*), who recently joined our practice. These two highly capable Physician Assistants will be in the Raleigh office with me, and I will continue to provide guidance and oversight and of course patient care in both Clayton and Raleigh. In both of

“Dreams Do Come True”

Notes Doctor as New Family Clinic Opens



Dr. Vaidya-Tank (right) leads a discussion about this patient’s progress with Waseem Garbia.

these settings we simply will provide functional medicine services that are broader and deeper than the norm.

“I’ve mentioned before that here in America, there is no real sense of wellness being an inherent part of medicine,” Dr. Vaidya-Tank explains. “Of course in virtually any medical office you can get a physi-

cal—but what in fact does that mean? You can listen to a patient’s heart and lungs and simply say ‘everything sounds okay,’ and the patient may in fact be harboring a critical health issue.

“Or a patient may be depressed or anxious or not sleeping well, or have menopause or some other hormonal issues that are

WASEEM GARBIA, PA-C, OFFERS TREATMENT FOR ACNE

Waseem Garbia, a certified Physician Assistant, has joined Dr. Vaidya-Tank’s practice and is now working full-time in the Raleigh Family Medical Clinic. He has extensive experience in primary care, urgent care, cardiology, and aesthetics, lasers, and injectables technology, and is a national trainer for Botox and fillers. And he has a special interest and expertise in easing or completely eliminating the physical and emotional pain of acne for many patients.

Mr. Garbia earned his undergraduate degree from George Mason University in Virginia, and completed his Physician Assistant studies at the Jefferson College of Health Sciences in Roanoke 12 years ago.

After completing his certification programs, Mr. Garbia helped implement and structure one of the first bariatric centers in Virginia, gaining proficiency with many different types of lasers used in laparoscopic and plastic surgery.

“I do cosmeceutical injections, with fillers and Botox,” he says, “and I do have a special interest—and a good deal of experience and success—in treating acne. My view is that acne is not simply a skin condition, but that it is in fact an inflammatory disease and my goal is to target and resolve the cause of inflammation.

“Often this includes dietary changes, or perhaps increasing fluid intake, or increasing the intake of green veggies while curbing the eating of so many preservatives. We’re in a time when the norm is eating packaged food—which feeds the inflammatory process within our entire body. Often, that resident inflammation will manifest in the skin. Dr. Vaidya-Tank encourages, and I fully support, looking at the body in a holistic way.

“I’m glad to report that I have had many patients suffering with acne, from moderate to intense, who have had excellent results as we work together over time.

“Recently, for example, I worked with a woman in her late twenties who had pretty significant scarring from acne. She came to see me about the possibility of laser treatment to reduce the impact of this scarring, rather than treatment for the acne itself.

“I told her I couldn’t address the scarring issue until we got the acne issue under control, and she responded that she had had twice been on Accutane treatment and offered the view that ‘No one has been able to get this condition under control. I just need to reduce the impact of this scarring. I’m reluctant to go out in public. I put on a lot of makeup to cover the problem as best I can.’

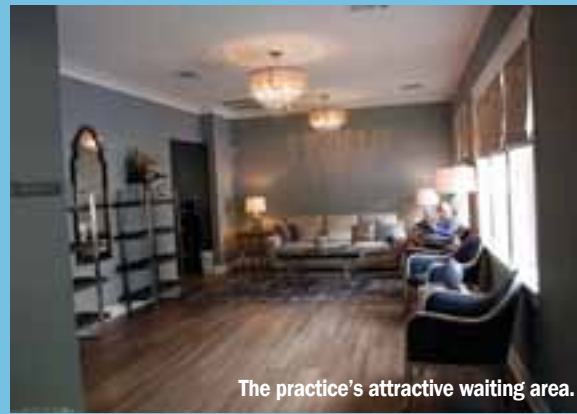
“And I responded to her, ‘Give me one year, because this treatment does take time. But I will get your acne 50 to 60 percent better within six weeks. If you’re not happy in six weeks, we’ll just target your scarring and go from there.’

“She agreed to that proposal,” Mr. Garbia says. “I put her on two different washes, a zinc-based sunscreen, and two topical medications. I try to avoid oral medications. I had her take a number of vitamins, orally, and in fact she had a wonderful outcome. Within six weeks, we saw an 80 percent improvement in her acne condition. After one year, we did four different laser treatments to soften her scarring, and then added a bit of filler. And she emerged from this as a completely different person.

“Recently she sent me an email, telling me she hasn’t worn makeup for the past three months—the first time she has been free of the need for makeup for 15 years.”



A happy patient emerges from the new Family Wellness Clinic at 8020 Creedmoor Road, in Raleigh.



The practice's attractive waiting area.



State-of-the-art equipment is in use throughout the practice.

simply not addressed in the typical physical exam. There is so much about wellness that is typically simply not addressed in primary care. There isn't time for it.

"But in our family clinics, that is simply not the case. We have changed that equation, so that, in fact, there is time to consistently provide the highest quality of health care."

MOVING AHEAD

Describing her professional path, Dr. Vaidya-Tank notes that "the traditional approach to primary care left me very unsatisfied. So I moved initially into advanced lipid testing and increasingly moved down the path of prevention. We started doing more preventive medicine in this practice, and then moved into wellness and anti-aging. We saw that patients really responded to that approach, and responded as well—physically and emotionally—to such invaluable services as providing high quality supplements, and hormone replacement therapy. And, perhaps most important of all," she says, "our pa-

tients responded to the time we spend with them—offering them services that make it easier for them to get everything they need to protect and improve their health, right here in one location.

"And with our patients, we talk about and provide guidance for making important lifestyle changes—such as genetic testing to support healthy diets. We really are effective in guiding weight loss—which is a huge health issue. We're reversing diabetes. We're reversing heart disease. This is real weight loss, real reversal of disease. And it is really satisfying—for patient and provider."

EXPANDED SERVICES, COMPREHENSIVE TESTING

Dr. Vaidya-Tank notes that "in our new Center in Raleigh, with a good deal of additional space, we'll be focusing a great deal more on important ancillary services. One of the new offerings will be PRP (platelet-rich plasma) therapy—using the patient's own blood to rebuild damaged tendons or

cartilage—helping the body to rejuvenate itself.

"And we will have expanded offerings such as advanced lipid testing and our genetic testing to support weight loss. I'm really excited about offering women and men a comprehensive hormone replacement therapy protocol, and eventually I do want, for example, to offer IV therapy for vitamins when it can be useful to do so.

"And, somewhat uniquely, perhaps, we will focus on sexual health, a subject that is often neglected and simply not talked about. At the same time, it's an aspect of our lives that makes a big difference for a great many people.

"Testing is such an important part of our functional medicine practice," says Dr. Vaidya-Tank. "We'll be doing stress testing in the office, including cardio-pulmonary stress testing, to assess the health of your lungs and your heart. The genetic testing aspect of much of what we do is really cutting edge. It tells us, in many different circumstances, what to use and what not to use. With confidence, based on this testing, we may say to a patient: 'For your genes, this is how you need to eat. This is how you need to work out. The testing makes sense of the fact that you crave sugar, and why you eat when you're upset. It's all there in your genes.'

"This certainly gains the attention of patients," she says. "It's like a lightbulb clicks on. And when they are getting these messages from their own genes, they are most often much more compliant.

"The new office space is itself beautiful, large, and calming and soothing. We're looking forward to providing an extraordinary level of care to all of our patients." *H&H*

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COUPLE EXPERIENCING HAPPIER, HEALTHIER LIVES

Life took a sharp turn for the better when Elliott Kanarek and his wife, Shari, eased into their forties. They live in Garner.

"Several years ago, we were ending a long-term relationship with a doctor who was retiring, and we had the great good fortune to connect with Dr. Bhavna Vaidya-Tank at the Family Wellness Clinic in Clayton," notes Mr. Kanarek.

"I felt more like 60 than 40 at the time, to tell the truth," he says. "I was chronically tired, just very low energy, and as a consequence I was also feeling pretty depressed. I had a sense that I was on a downhill slide, which I didn't like at all.

"Dr. Vaidya-Tank reversed this trajectory rapidly and effectively, with extensive exams that I had never had before. She modified my diet, gave me a sensible exercise program, and designed a custom supplement program for me based on the results of her testing.

"In this process, she identified health issues that had never before been part of my health profile, and they needed to be addressed. I was a good, compliant patient, and I still am. Within a couple of months of our first visit, I noticed a big improvement in my energy level, and it just keeps getting better. Honestly, my energy level right now is 100 times better than it was the day we first met."

AND HIS WIFE . . .

Shari Kanarek was also dealing with a number of health issues when she first met with Dr. Vaidya-Tank about a year ago. "I felt there was a strong possibility that I was developing thyroid issues, a common problem in my family. I was gaining a lot of weight in a kind of relentless way, no matter what I did—and I suspected there was a link between my weight gain and the health of my thyroid—and that proved to be true.

"What I especially like about Dr. Vaidya-Tank is that she is so thorough in her work, and uses extensive genetic and other testing as a guide. As a result, we modified my diet, how and when I exercise, and the medications and supplements I am taking. She cares about every little detail. I think of her as a gifted artistic doctor, because she cares so much about every aspect of what she is doing.

"As a result of the work I've done with Dr. Vaidya-Tank in the past year, I've lost 25 pounds and I have truly regained my sense of good health and well-being. I feel stronger and healthier in every way, every day."

HEALTH AND PREVENTIVE CARE FOR AGES 6 AND UP

The Family Wellness Clinics—now in both Raleigh and Clayton—provide patient care for ages 6 and up with an emphasis on functional medicine, wellness, and prevention.

"Our unique practice," says founder Bhavna Vaidya-Tank, MD, "focuses on primary care and functional medicine, which involves treating the entire individual—not just the illness. We accomplish this by cultivating a relationship with each patient. We are accepting new patients in both locations, and strive to provide services and hours that meet your needs."

Among the services provided:

- Wellness visits/Physicals/Pap smears/ Sports Physicals/DOT Physicals
- Chronic conditions such as Diabetes/ Hypertension
- Thyroid Disorders/Hormonal Issues
- Advanced Cardiac/Cholesterol Testing
- Joint Injections/trigger point injections
- Office Dermatology including mole removal/biopsies
- Chemical Peels/Micro-needling for acne/sun damage
- Family Planning/Mirena insertions and removals
- Weight Management/Genetic Testing
- Women's Health/Men's Health/ Testosterone Therapy/ED