

LIVINGWELL



Physicians' Primary Care began when five independent physician groups joined forces



Celebrating 25 YEARS of medical care

Susan Bennett, APR, CPRC Guest Columnist | USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Physicians' Primary Care of Southwest Florida (PPC) is celebrating its 25th year as the largest physician-owned and managed multi-specialty primary care group in Lee County. ● It's a milestone that Managing Physician Dr. Mary Yankaskas says is the result of five independent physician groups deciding in 1996 to join forces to preserve their independence. ● "It was a time of change in the national health care system with the influence of insurance companies and hospital acquisitions. Many well-known local physicians had a desire to remain independent," she said. See CARE, Page 2C



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: When children become adults, they can be treated by a physician in one of the Family or Internal Medicine offices; The original Cape family practice on Viscaya Parkway in Cape Coral; PPC won three national awards last year from the American Medical Association and the American Heart Association for improving patient health in cholesterol management, controlling blood pressure and management of Type II Diabetes. PHOTOS SPECIAL TO THE NEWS-PRESS



ABOVE: Physicians' Primary Care has more than 270 employees and providers with 10 offices located in Fort Myers, Cape Coral and Lehigh Acres. LEFT: The practice includes three specialties: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine and Pediatrics.



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After weighing all the factors, 26 physicians in family medicine obstetrics/gynecology and pediatrics merged to become Physicians' Primary Care of Southwest Florida. The merger enabled the physicians to not only remain independent but to provide enhanced quality patient care.

In subsequent years, Physicians' Primary Care expanded their medical offices focusing on patient convenience and efficiency as well as expanded diagnostic and therapeutic services.

The merger wasn't without its challenges.

"Dealing with different personalities was the biggest hurdle, but we learned to work together for the benefit of our patients," Yankaskas said,

Another major hurdle occurred in in

2006, when the administrative office in Pinebrook Park was demolished in a fire that also destroyed billing records. This fire, while disruptive, did not impact on-going patient care.

"We have an incredible team of physicians and employees who are more like family than co-workers. Most notably, we have 13 employees who have been with us for the entire 25 years and some even longer with their original practices," Yankaskas said.

Today, Physicians' Primary Care continues to be the largest physician-owned primary care group with more than 270 employees and providers with 10 offices conveniently located in Fort Myers, Cape Coral and Lehigh Acres. The practice includes three specialties: Family Medicine, Internal Medicine and Pediatrics.

This primary care model means that PPC can offer medical care throughout all life stages. Babies and children can be cared for by a PPC pediatrician.

When children become adults, they can be treated by a physician in one of the Family or Internal Medicine offices. Mom and Dad also can receive health-care from the Family and Internal Medicine physicians.

"Not only is this model of healthcare more convenient for our patients, but your electronic health records follow you throughout your lifetime, meaning that you are assured that regardless of which PPC physician provides your care, they will have your complete medical history," Yankaskas said.

PPC in-house services include laboratory, X-rays, CT scans, ultrasound, physical therapy, lactation services, telehealth and more.

Physicians' Primary Care also is recognized as a Patient-Centered Medical Home by NCQA. This model of care strengthens the relationship between patient and their primary care physician.

Physicians' Primary Care has consis-

tently been recognized year-after-year for having some of the area's Top Doctors, as reported by Castle Connolly Medical Ltd., an independent research and information company that is the nation's leading provider of information on top physicians.

PPC also won three national awards last year from the American Medical Association and the American Heart Association for improving patient health in cholesterol management, controlling blood pressure and management of Type II Diabetes.

Yankaskas says PPC's slogan, "Let Our Family Take Care of Your Family," describes how the staff and physicians feel about their patients.

"Our plan is to grow and expand while maintaining quality patient care and maintaining our culture of letting our family take care of your family," Yankaskas said.

For more information, visit ppcswfl.com.