

Sharing Skills *to Aid Patients*

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Dr. Bhavna Vaidya-Tank



Shannon Mooring



Jamie Darby



Jason Newman

The four providers at the Family Wellness Clinic in Clayton blend compassion, competence, and exceptional levels of cooperation for all the patients they serve, from age six and up.

Their combined talents and commitment continue their recognition, on the federal level, as a Patient-Centered Medical Home—acknowledged as the highest standard of primary care. “The medical home is . . . a model or philosophy of primary care that is patient-centered, comprehensive, team-based, coordinated, accessible, and focused on quality and safety,” the federal guidelines say.

Dr. Bhavna Vaidya-Tank, founder of the Family Wellness Clinic a decade ago, is the architect and overseer of this unusual and highly effective health care delivery system.

“We all four see our own patients and each of us has a different approach,” she explains. “That in itself makes us unique. Some patients like seeing Shannon, others choose Jamie, or Jason or me. Patients are free to choose whoever they want to see.

“We constantly share thoughts and information. We share articles and have meetings where we pull charts and talk in-depth about specific cases. Collectively we put all of our training and experience and knowledge together, and it’s pretty potent. We think this approach provides each of our patients the very best we have to offer.”

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Shannon Mooring, an Adult Nurse Practitioner, has worked side-by-side with Dr. Tank for over four years. She completed her Master of Science degree in Duke University’s cardiovascular Nurse Practitioner program, and has had extensive experience in hospital and private-practice settings for more than a decade, with special interest and training in cardiac care.

“In this practice, I see patients 13 and older, and because of my interest and experience, I often see patients who may have cardiovascular issues. One of the greatest things about being part of this practice is that we all collaborate in the care of our patients, which is a great advantage—having more than one brain on a case.

“All of us—Dr. Tank perhaps most broadly—keep up with current literature, and offer the best tests available. For example, we’re now offering the Corus CAD test that predicts the likelihood of obstructive heart diseases that is actually more sensitive than a stress test. And it’s only a blood test, and is thus completely non-invasive. It has been really helpful to us because it can tell me the percentage likelihood that an obstruction exists.”

Jamie Darby—Miss Sunshine to many of her patients—is a Family Nurse Practitioner, with a master’s degree from UNC-Wilmington. She has been with Dr. Tank for several years.

She especially relates well to children and their parents. “I have four children myself,” she says with a smile. “One in college, one in high school, one in middle school, and one in elementary school. Therefore,

A RALEIGH PRESENCE COMING SOON!

Responding to many requests, Dr. Tank is opening a Raleigh satellite office.

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when it comes to children, I am a realist, and of course I draw on this long experience of parenthood when I work with parents and their children. When I share my personal stories with my patients, you can often just see the stress melt away.

“My daughter asked me the other day why I liked my job. And I told her, “I just love my patients. Every patient is like a new story in my life, and each is a new opportunity to be helpful and enhance, as I can, their physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

“I coax and encourage many of my patients to engage in simple but extremely important lifestyle changes in an incremental way. Very often these are changes related to diet and exercise. Some patients think it’s a huge undertaking to make these changes, and I’ll often end up suggesting two simple tasks.

“For weight loss patients, who I see every day,” she notes, “I’ll ask them first and foremost to stop drinking their sugar—in sweet tea, lemonade, juice, and sodas—and walk for 15 minutes every day. Just those two things.

“These are important but simple requests. Most people feel they can do what I ask—and many do. And then they begin to see the results and suddenly they’re motivated to do more, and even when they slip, they can remember their successes and move forward again.”

Jason Newman joined the practice this past January, after holding several research posts. He completed his Master-level studies as a Certified Physician Assistant at Shenandoah University, in Virginia. He has

a BS degree from Virginia Tech in human nutrition, foods, and exercise, with a concentration in dietetics.

“By training and by inclination, I tend to stress lifestyle issues with all of my patients,” he says. “I’m always encouraging a healthy diet, optimal weight, healthy exercise, avoidance of smoking, and alcohol in moderation—because each of these issues, collectively and separately, contribute to general well-being.

“Diabetes, for example, is a common chronic condition—typically the sugar level in the blood has been too high for too long. We need insulin to absorb sugar, which overworks the pancreas to produce insulin. Eventually, the pancreas loses its ability to perform. By the time a person develops diabetes, half of their pancreatic function is gone.

“And of course sugars are toxic, running in the blood stream, potentially causing problems to the eyes, the kidneys, to the nerves and the sensation of the skin—and diabetes can increase the risk for infections and heart attacks and strokes. The sugars are so toxic, they contribute to chronic inflammation.

“A 28-year-old male came to me with an A1C of 12.5 percent—a test that gives the average blood sugar for the past three months,” he recounts. “He was three times over the level of a person without diabetes, and he was on medication for the problem.

“I tweaked his medications a bit, but more importantly, I encouraged him to change his eating habits, and start exercising. Three months later, his A1C was down to 6.6. He made awesome improvement. At 28, he is a young guy, no longer a ticking time bomb for uncontrolled diabetes for years to come. A commitment to lifestyle changes made a huge difference.” **h&h**