

75 th ST Medical Serving Ocean City For 25 Years

Dr. Victor Gong Family Practice

By TRAVIS BROWN

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OCEAN CITY – Independently operating any business can be difficult but it's exponentially harder in the field of medicine. However, the 75th Street Medical in Ocean City is celebrating its 25th anniversary with no signs of slowing down.

In the years ahead, owner Dr. Victor Gong plans on continuing the medical center's focus on variable care while continually incorporating new technology and practices into his operation.

Treating about 17,000 patients every year, 75th Street Medical provides an all-in-one care service that emphasizes the trio of urgent care, family practice and weight control.

"So actually we're a one-stop shop in a way. It's a good model to do family practice, urgent care and weight control wellness," said Gong.

The medical center is unique both because of its diverse approach to health care and the fact that it is owned by Gong, not a hospital or company. That independence can be a double-edged sword, he admitted, as it offers flexibility while increasing responsibility.

Gong has something of a frontier philosophy with health care, reporting that he is always looking for new services and options for his patients.

"As an independent, you tend to work harder in general, not only physicians. You work harder because you're an independent. You try to do more customer service, looking for new things," he said. "But there are advantages to being an independent. You don't have constraints with a whole bunch of board meetings or committees to answer to. If I have an idea, I just implement it. I finance and implement it. If it works, great, if it doesn't, that's my problem."

This has led to 75th Street Medical incorporating and trying many different types of care in their quarter century of operation. The medical center contains its own lab area and pharmacy. During the summer, when Ocean City swells with hundreds of thousands of visitors, a majority of the center's patients are urgent care. Gong has seen thousands of lacerations, food poisonings, embedded fishhooks and concussions in 25 years. The facility even has its own X-ray capabili-



Dr. Victor Gong is pictured on the porch of his 75th Street Medical practice in Ocean City.

Photo by Travis Brown

ties and was voted the Delmarva Media Group Readers' Choice best urgent care on Delmarva in 2013.

Everything is designed to get patients in, out and on with their vacation with as little fuss as possible, according to Gong.

Besides the urgent care, 75th Street also specializes in the usual family practice and weight control wellness. In keeping with the philosophy of a one-stop medical shop, Gong added the weight control wellness to his operation several years ago with an emphasis on education rather than pre-packed diets.

"It's personal responsibility, give them the power to do that stuff, it's that simple," he said. "We talk about basic nutrition, exercise, we talk about vitamins then we'll get into actually anti-aging. We've got a lot of advanced stuff that we're doing now."

Some of those advanced programs include aspects like vitamin testing and stem cell banking, where a patient can have some of their own stem cells collected and stored long-term for use in the future. It's a popular practice and one that Gong expects to pay big dividends as the therapeutic uses of the cells advances.

Gong is confident about where 75th Street Medical can go in the future in large part to its success in its first 25 years, despite the added difficulties of being an independent health care operation in a constantly integrating field. The facility is the natural evolution of Gong's first venture into medicine in Ocean City in the late 1980s when he began a house call program.

"I guess that flair was always there with me. But that wasn't atypical 25 years ago," he said. "I can't say that I was atypical. A lot of

physicians were independent practice them. It was the norm then. It's been gradually dropped and it's going more rapidly now."

Trained in internal medicine at Robert Wood Johnson Hospital and emergency training at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Gong at one point operated three different medical facilities in the area before consolidating into one. He hosted a healthy cooking show on WMDT for four years and wrote two best-selling books on AIDS. He has also contributed more than 200 articles to local print publications in that time.

Within the next decade, Gong is predicting that independent doctors will become a rarer and rarer sight. But he doesn't have plans to go anywhere or become a subsidiary of any of the larger operations in the area. He did, however, acknowledge that staying independent will probably lead to more than a few gray hairs in the next few years.

"The medical business is very complicated. There are a lot of regulations, a lot to sustain all of that and then you have to compete with the bigger entities that have a lot of infrastructure and deal with that stuff, so as an independent it is hard," Gong said.

Still, Gong feels "poised to enter the arena" of the coming health care climate and plans to diversify the operation further. He sees the weight control wellness side of 75th Street Medical as a truly emergent field and is looking to continue incorporating the latest vitamin testing and nutritional education.

For more information on 75th Street Medical, visit www.75thst-medical.com and for more information on the weight control wellness program visit www.docsweightcontrol.com.