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The specialists at **RMA Marlon** help South Jersey residents who struggle to conceive realize the joy of becoming parents. page 18



# Labor of Love

The specialists at **RMA Marlton** help South Jersey residents who struggle to conceive realize the joy of becoming parents. by **BILL DONAHUE**



Dr. Jason Franasiak planned and designed the Marlton facility based largely on his experience working at RMA New Jersey's flagship clinic in Basking Ridge.

**As** April leads into May, the signs of spring become more noticeable with each passing day: Tree branches pop with the buds of green leaves. Flowers push through the soil and prepare to bloom. Birdsong fills the air. In other words, life has returned.

For people who may be having difficulty conceiving a child, however, the sights and sounds of spring may only to serve to remind them of their struggles. Individuals and couples who are in such a position tend to feel isolated and without options, but Jason M. Franasiak, M.D., FACOG, HCLD/ALD, says that shouldn't be the case.

Dr. Franasiak is a reproductive endocrinologist, as well as the lead physician and laboratory director of RMA Marlton, a state-of-the-art 41,600-square-foot center committed to one noble purpose: helping people in South Jersey either start or add to their families.

"The psychology behind infertility is very challenging and complicated," says Dr. Franasiak. "Many people have an innate drive to have children, and when they're unable to do that, it brings up a lot of stress and feelings of inadequacy. It's very important to support people through the emotional roller coaster of infertility, which is why our

team works very closely with patients on the emotional aspects of their diagnosis, as well as the medical side of things."

National Infertility Awareness Week occurs every April, a reminder that infertility affects a significant portion of the U.S. population. Dr. Franasiak cites recent data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which suggests that 12 percent of American women of reproductive age have impaired fecundity, the formal term for difficulty getting pregnant or carrying a pregnancy to term. Likewise, almost 9 percent of American men aged 25 to 44 years reported that they or their partner saw a doctor for



As a reproductive endocrinologist and infertility specialist, Dr. Emily Osman has an intimate understanding of what clients are going through—even more so because she went through it herself.

We want to continue to grow and help families in southern New Jersey.

—DR. EMILY K. OSMAN

advice, testing, or treatment for infertility during their lifetime.

RMA Marlton is one of 10 fertility clinics that make up RMA New Jersey. Having opened its doors in April 2019, RMA Marlton celebrated another milestone more than six months ago: the launch of its embryology and andrology laboratory and on-site ambulatory surgery center. The clinic has since completed a number of successful IVF cycles, egg retrievals, and embryo transfers, among other delicate procedures, to help patients realize the dream of parenthood.

“Things are going very well in Marlton,” adds Dr. Franasiak, who planned and designed the Marlton facility based largely on his experience working at RMA New Jersey’s flagship clinic in Basking Ridge. “Everything I learned at Basking Ridge has helped us ensure that we’re providing the same great care RMA has been providing for the past 20 years. We’re now offering the same excellent clinical care, lab care, and research capabilities to patients of South Jersey.”

Of course, the staff of RMA Marlton strive to reassure each patient who enters the facility. In addition to the doctors, nurses, and other members of the medical staff who provide specialized medical care, RMA Marlton has a mental-health support team whose primary goal is to help patients contend with the emotional aspects of an infertility diagnosis.

Dr. Franasiak recalls one patient who underwent two to three unsuccessful IVF cycles elsewhere before coming to RMA Marlton. The 41-year-old woman had a condition known as recurrent implantation failure caused by chronic endometritis. By taking “a different approach” to clinical management, Dr. Franasiak says RMA Marlton was able to transfer a healthy, genetically normal embryo and helped her get pregnant on the first try.

Emily K. Osman, M.D., joined RMA Marlton in late 2020. As a reproductive endocrinologist and infertility specialist, she has an intimate understanding of what clients are going through—even more so because she went through it herself. Although she and her husband had no trouble conceiving their first child, they experienced difficulty trying to have a second. She underwent an IVF cycle and preimplantation genetic testing at a sister RMA New Jersey facility, with successful results. She gave birth to her second child, a girl, in the summer of 2020.

Dr. Osman says some of her most “special” patients are individuals who may not currently have issues with infertility. Women who have recently been diagnosed with cancer and wish to freeze their eggs to preserve their fertility for the future come to mind.

“It’s amazing the things we can do now compared to the time I initially started down this path,” says Dr. Osman, who splits her time between RMA New Jersey’s clinics in Marlton and Princeton. “One of the biggest changes has been in the direction of single-embryo transfer. With a single genetically normal embryo, we now have the ability to increase the likelihood of a patient carrying a baby to term and having a safe pregnancy. Obstetrical and neonatal morbidity and mortality have been reduced greatly.”

Like its sister facilities, RMA Marlton has been engaged in groundbreaking research to further address the challenges of infertility. Dr. Franasiak cites current studies on ovarian rejuvenation, endometrial receptivity to predict the ideal time for an



RMA Marlton’s embryology and andrology laboratory and on-site ambulatory surgery center opened in late 2020.

embryo transfer, and methods to optimize the uterine microbiome. Likewise, Dr. Osman has been engrossed in research involving innovative methods of embryo cryopreservation, which she says has been showing promising results in clinical trials.

“We want to continue to grow and help families in southern New Jersey,” she adds. “What’s most exciting is our trajectory. We’re really busy with patients now, and we feel so lucky to be able to help them and to provide them with all the resources they need to grow their families.” ■



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON RMA New Jersey, including its location in Marlton, visit [rmanetwork.com](http://rmanetwork.com) or call (856) 267-8100.