

# suburban life

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**The Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics** aims to elevate the level of dental care and expand its circle of influence both near and far. *page 36*

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Top-shelf dentists, retirement, and more



# Raising the Bar

The **Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics** aims to elevate the level of dental care and expand its circle of influence both near and far. *by* BILL DONAHUE *photography by* NINA LEA PHOTOGRAPHY

**It's fair to say Philip L. Fava II, D.M.D.,** has achieved a position of eminence in his field. He's known as a skilled clinician and the leader of a growing periodontal practice, as well as a respected researcher and educator of peers at home and abroad. He's also surprisingly down to earth, as evidenced by a letter he sent to his parents approximately five years ago.



"In the letter I told them, 'Now that I've been running this business for a while, I've come to the realization that everything I needed to be successful I learned because of how I was raised,'" says Dr. Fava, who came of age working in his family's scrap-metal business on Long Island, New York. "In school, I learned the tools of a fancy trade, but everything else about the success of this practice and our ties to the community has to do with what my parents taught me."

Dr. Fava, a board-certified dental implant surgeon and periodontist, as well as a diplomate of the American Board of Periodontology, is the director of the Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics. With offices in Ambler and Northeast Philadelphia, the practice specializes in the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of periodontal disease, as well as the surgical placement of dental implants, in some cases as quickly as a single visit. Dr. Fava takes a "blue-collar mentality" to treating patients, adding that every member of his team "knows the difference between treating patients and caring for people."

"No matter what we're doing for a patient, whether it's a soft-tissue graft, or treating gum disease, or replacing all their teeth, we're focused on just two things: the patient's treatment outcome, and their experience," he says. "We have, literally, thousands of five-star reviews, so our approach has resonated with people. My point is that, from the time I've been here, we have enjoyed a wonderful run of treating patients like people and making genuine connections along the way."

## Striving for the Best

Dr. Fava leads the Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics with founder Robert A. Levine, D.D.S.; the pair were partners for over five years. Dr. Fava's vision for the practice going forward: "to expand our circle of influence, and to elevate the level of dental care in our greater area." He's off to a fine start, having acquired the Ambler practice of the late John V. Di Girolamo, D.D.S., who served patients' periodontal needs for 40 years prior to his death in 2018.

As part of his devotion to the so-called Golden Rule, Dr. Fava believes all patients deserve the best care possible, even if it means making some sacrifices to the bottom line. For example, he uses the strongest and most expensive dental implant on the market, made of titanium and zirconium. The reason: He believes it decreases complications and ultimately delivers a better long-term result. Also, when performing grafts or other procedures that require tissue regeneration, he utilizes autogenous material—meaning bone and soft tissue that comes directly from the patient—because it tends to produce a better outcome.

"I see a lot of patients who have been disappointed by previous experiences elsewhere," he adds. "Dentistry has gone through a significant change in recent years, with these big organizations coming in and taking over

practices, and they're usually unable to answer the complex dental problems many patients have. I see disappointed patients every week and get them to a good dentist, and form a team around them who can treat those complex cases."

After all, periodontal disease can have far-reaching implications to a person's overall health, not just oral health. A growing body of evidence suggests gum disease can contribute to serious health concerns such as heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

While surgery was once considered the primary mode of treating the disease, especially severe cases, the armamentarium has since expanded. The Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics also offers less invasive options such as LANAP, short for Laser-Assisted New Attachment Procedure.

"LANAP has had a big, big impact on treatment," Dr. Fava says. "It has enabled us to

take patients who were candidates for traditional surgery but would have required many extractions, so we're now able to help patients keep their teeth. It's also incredibly comfortable for people, so it has motivated them to get more comprehensive treatment more quickly. By treating the whole mouth at once [with LANAP], rather than doing a quarter of the mouth per year through surgery, we're able to reduce both systemic and local chronic inflammation levels, and most patients say, 'I can't believe how much better I feel!'"

**"We work with people of all backgrounds, and we're here to make a difference in their quality of life."**

—Dr. Philip L. Fava II, the Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics



Like Dr. Fava, Dr. Schoenebeck is board certified in periodontics and a diplomate of the American Board of Periodontology. He's also a 23-year veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces. He spent 10 years in active duty with the Navy, followed by 13 years in the reserves; he retired from the reserves in March.

"A lot of what we do here is taking patients out of discomfort or disfigured dentition, and healing something that has been damaged or destroyed over time," he says. "As a result, we have the opportunity to change someone's life and help them become whole again."

Besides being known for providing excellent clinical outcomes, the Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics has fostered its reputation as a source of groundbreaking research and education for clinicians locally, nationally, and internationally. The practice has established

study clubs to advance the field of dental implantology and periodontics. In addition, Dr. Fava travels near and far—from North Carolina and Florida to Australia—to share his knowledge with fellow clinicians devoted to elevating their craft.

Going forward, Dr. Fava would like to build a bigger team of highly skilled and motivated periodontists, so he can fulfill his role as educator-in-chief in a more structured way. He has no intention, however, of stepping away from patient care.

"I'm focused on continuing the legacy that was started here," he says. "We work with people of all backgrounds, and we're here to make a difference in their quality of life. We've always been a niche practice, so we've sort of been a well-kept secret until now. We don't want to be a secret anymore." ■

### Becoming Whole Again

Eric F. Schoenebeck, D.D.S., joined the practice two years ago. Having come from a large dental operation, he appreciated Dr. Fava's patient-first approach, his ambitions for growth, and his commitment to what he calls "ideal dentistry."

"Phil's primary goal is to give patients the best experience they can possibly have, and to leave the patient a better person than they were when they arrived," says Dr. Schoenebeck, who works primarily out of the Ambler office. "He has created a place where you would feel comfortable sending your own child or parent, and that's the kind of place I've always wanted to be part of."



Like Dr. Fava, Dr. Eric F. Schoenebeck is board certified in periodontics and a diplomate of the American Board of Periodontology. He's also a 23-year veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces.

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