

Moving Forward

From breast reconstruction to facial rejuvenation and body contouring, **Dr. Gary A. Tuma of Plastic Surgery Associates of New Jersey** guides patients down the path to life-changing plastic and reconstructive surgery.

by LEIGH STUART photography by JODY ROBINSON

Plastic Surgery is a serious life decision and certainly not one to be made in haste. Any respectable medical professional will encourage a patient to take the time to research and plan their procedure—breast reconstruction, body contouring, or aesthetic surgery, for example—and also carefully vet the practitioner who will serve as a guide through this life-changing process.

The individual who performs the procedure should have advanced training and education, of course, but Gary A. Tuma, M.D., FACS, suggests a practitioner should also possess other vital elements: compassion and a keen eye.

“Often our patients come to us in the midst of significant life changes and with weighty decisions to be made,” says Dr. Tuma, who leads the surgical team at Plastic Surgery Associates of New Jersey. “Our staff is very comfortable with difficult situations, and I think this differentiates us from most other plastic surgery offices. We see cancer patients, trauma patients, as well as cosmetic patients, so our staff is well versed in handling all sorts of different situations that arise regarding patient care.”

In his practice, he is particularly interested helping patients with breast cancer. Early into his career, Dr. Tuma came up with a compelling idea: to partner with an oncologic breast surgeon as a way to provide complete breast cancer care in a single practice. In January 2011, this dream came to fruition at Capital Health.

“Patients have found ours is a much more convenient setting than traveling downtown,” he says. “They appreciate the beautiful hospital/office setting with easy access and free valet parking. They are much happier not having to fight traffic going in to and out of the city. If you had travel downtown to Philadelphia to a university hospital, you would have gotten me, but now you can travel to Pennington and see me right in your backyard.”

Dr. Tuma emphasizes that he aims to “maintain an academic practice in a community setting.” He works in tandem with The Center for Comprehensive Breast Care. As such, he is able to offer convenient office visits and peace of mind to patients who are under the care of multiple practitioners.

“We share the same space, the same staff, so we are able to coordinate care,” he explains. “This alleviates a great deal of anxiety surrounding a breast cancer diagnosis. Patients are fully taken care of from the start of their cancer care through reconstruction. Because we work with each other every day, communication is simplified. We are also often able to see patients during the same time period, so the patient doesn’t need to make multiple trips to the office.”

Comprehensive Care

No matter the procedure, Dr. Tuma aims to help each patient look and feel as natural as possible. Of note, Dr. Tuma’s studies at the University of Pennsylvania sparked what he calls a “keen interest and expertise” in the area of soft-tissue augmentation.

“Using a patient’s own fat for augmentation, we can rejuvenate the face or, in cases of breast reconstruction, soften some of the flaws inherent in that procedure,” he says. “We can also use the technique for body contouring, or to address any complications that may arise from



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Dr. Tuma portrait courtesy of Capital Health

poorly performed liposuction.”

Unfortunately, Dr. Tuma sees many patients for revision surgeries to address past procedures that some might refer to as “botched.” Fortunately, for all his patients, Dr. Tuma’s practice is part of Capital Health Medical Center – Hopewell, meaning patients will benefit from on-site resources.

“The same expertise in anesthesia care offered to brain surgery or heart surgery patients is afforded to our patients,” Dr. Tuma notes. “If an overnight stay is required, the patient can stay at the hospital and benefit from comprehensive nursing care.”

In addition to breast health, Dr. Tuma has expertise in procedures for the face, breast, and body, with additional expertise in periorbital rejuvenation such as blepharoplasty, or eyelid surgery. He also offers a full range of noninvasive treatments, from injectables to body sculpting via SculpSure, an FDA-cleared means of reducing unwanted fat in certain areas of the body. Additionally, the office offers medical-grade skin care and services such as micro-needling, cosmetic tattooing and lash lifts.

Patients also appreciate Dr. Tuma’s adoption of cutting-edge technology, such as Vectra 3D imaging by Canfield. This essentially enables him to take photographs of a patient prior to surgery and then enhance those images to show how the patient will look after the procedure during the consultation.

“It is unique and very helpful if, for example, a patient desires breast augmentation,” he adds. “We can place different-size implants and show the patient on their own body what these implants would potentially look like.”

Just as his patients want to improve how they look and feel, Dr. Tuma is committed to self-improvement. When asked what inspires him to continue with his quest to ever better himself, Dr. Tuma says, humbly, “I like to challenge myself.”

“I want to be someone who is pushing the practice of plastic surgery forward,” he says. “In order to do that, you have to be well trained, well informed of all the recent techniques and advances, and never forget to have compassion while always having a keen eye. That is exactly what we’re doing for our patients here at Plastic Surgery Associates of New Jersey.” ■



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About Dr. Tuma

During the course of his medical studies, Dr. Tuma devoted extensive time to mastering the most delicate of procedures. For example, he elected to spend an extra year serving as a Harrison Research Fellow in plastic surgery at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where he conducted research on soft-tissue augmentation. He also went on to complete a plastic surgery residency at Emory University in Atlanta, during which time he focused on advanced cosmetic and reconstruction surgeries.

He served as an assistant clinical professor in the surgery department at Jefferson Plastic Surgery in Philadelphia, with simultaneous duties as a faculty member at Jefferson University Hospital, Albert Einstein Medical Center, and Methodist Hospital. Today, Dr. Tuma is double board certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery and the American Board of Surgery. In addition, he is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons and a board examiner for the American Board of Plastic Surgery. He is also the Director of Specialty Care for the Capital Health Medical Group where he manages all the medical and surgical specialties for the Capital Health System.

