

# suburbanlife

*Best of the Shore*

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# Taking the Lead

Dr. Philip Fava, the leader of **Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics**, sees no limits in his practice's ability to grow, deliver excellent care, and uplift others.

by **BILL DONAHUE** | photos by **ALISON DUNLAP**

**P**hilip L. Fava, D.M.D., is guided by three distinct motivations: to do the right thing; to grow, learn, and excel at whatever task he sets his mind to; and to help others achieve their greatest potential. In his formative years, these drivers supported him as captain of his soccer and wrestling teams to focus his efforts on others, and they continue to fuel him to this day, as the leader of a thriving dentistry practice, Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics (PCDIP).

As the practice's name reflects, Dr. Fava and his team specialize in the surgical placement of dental implants, soft-tissue aesthetic procedures, and the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of periodontal disease. The practice has grown steadily in recent years by adding clinicians and expanding from one office to three, thereby extending its reach to more general dentistry practices and patients in Philadelphia and its suburbs.

Most recently, PCDIP brought Fort Washington Periodontics P.C.—a successful practice built by Richard H. Cutler, D.M.D.—into the fold, to complement its offices in Ambler and Northeast Philadelphia. Dr. Cutler chose to join hands with Dr. Fava on a tight-knit clinical team that includes Eric F. Schoenebeck, D.M.D., and Dmitry Klass, D.D.S.

“Richard wanted to take care of his people and his patients at a certain level, which is why he sought me out,” Dr. Fava says. “He could have gone the way of private equity and sold [the practice] to corporate interests, but he chose to partner with someone who is a dedicated owner-operator, committed to continuous improvement, and consistently raising the level of care over time.

“By providing access to ongoing professional development and a vision for excellence,” he continues, “we’re building an organization that supports people to grow, acquire advanced skills, and take on more robust leadership roles.”

Dr. Fava credits his family, namely, his entrepreneurially minded parents, as well as his sister, for shaping his leadership style.

“A good leader uses their strengths for the betterment of other people,” he adds. “When I can leverage my time and skill to make things better for other people—whether for our staff, our patients, or our referring doctors—I am going to do it. I believe in something bigger than myself, and I get tremendous fulfillment from helping others. It is a personal point of pride.”

This is true for PCDIP’s entire surgical team, as well. All four doctors—Fava, Schoenebeck, Klass, and Cutler—meet once a month to go over complex cases, ensuring that they stay on the leading edge and remain connected and consistent as a team. Spanning four generations and enriched by each other’s expertise, experience, and perspectives, they have their eyes on the future while also looking at the past and present.

“Our referring doctors depend on us to deliver state-of-the-art surgical outcomes to their patients every time, and to be using advanced techniques that mimic the designs that Mother Nature has in mind,” Dr. Fava says. “It is important to us that our patients leave feeling that their





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—DR. PHILIP FAVA, PENNSYLVANIA CENTER FOR DENTAL IMPLANTS AND PERIODONTICS

mouths have been fully restored to an optimal state."

PCDIP has an ethos to direct all treatment to recreate nature the way biology is intended, not just augment what has been lost.

"The benefit of operating three practices that have been around for nearly four decades each is that I have gotten to see what happens two, three, four decades after therapy," Dr. Fava says. "Mother Nature is a great teacher, and I am her student."

Thus, the evolution in treatment has been shaped by how the body will change over time. This is a genuine attempt to produce results that are exceptional not just for the first five years, but also for the next three to four decades to come.

Technology has played a key role in the

practice's growth, too. Examples include highly accurate intraoral scanners, cone beam computed tomography, and a guided biofilm-therapy unit for each hygienist. More recently, the practice has invested heavily in 3D printing. Doing so has enabled the practice to print surgical guides for implant cases, as well as temporary teeth—single teeth, multiple teeth for bridges, and full-arch restorations—for improved outcomes and greater patient convenience.

Some friends and colleagues refer to Dr. Fava as a bit of the "Thomas Shelby of Periodontics," a reference to the protagonist in the TV period drama, *Peaky Blinders*. Shelby, played by Cillian Murphy, is known for being exceptionally ambitious, intelligent, and strategic—a natural leader who will do

anything for his family. Chuckling, Dr. Fava appreciates the comparison, in part because *Peaky Blinders* is his favorite show, though he is clear that he and Shelby differ in one fundamental way.

"He's a criminal, and I am acutely aware of that," Dr. Fava says. "Where I identify with him is that he is willing to bet big and he doesn't allow himself to fail. You won't hear me say I've never made a mistake, but I have a credo to continue learning and to persist: If I fall seven times, I will get back up eight. I have a responsibility to myself, my family, and our team and our patients. You have to be willing to go the extra mile to be achieve something worthwhile."

As he looks to the future, Dr. Fava is laser focused on maintaining the practice's track record of providing the highest quality of care to each patient. Of course, he never wants to stop growing—as a leader, a business owner, an educator, and a clinician. He envisions a day in the near future in which the practice creates a state-of-the-art surgery and education center, in which he can share his expertise with other clinicians from the Philadelphia area, from across the nation, and even globally.

"Our goal is to become a nationally recognized center for excellence," he says. "Does that mean at some point we incorporate more specialties? Perhaps. Most importantly, I want to raise the level of our referral practices and support their growth. We look to build on the experience we are providing to the patients of our referring dentists, and to earn their trust every day. We're always looking to grow, both in our excellence and in our impact on the patients we serve and our community, and we're going to raise other people up along with us in the process." ■



## **Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics**

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