Compassion

THAT'S MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

AT THE AESTHETIC AND DERMATOLOGY CENTER, DR. SUNNY WALIA OFFERS VETERANS NEW POSSIBILITIES FOR HEALING MIND AND BODY

When the patient, a veteran, showed up in the office of Dr. Sunny Walia with a painful, itchy and stiff scar on their amputated leg stump, Dr. Walia knew she could help. The patient had a prosthetic leg but was still quite limited in the ability to walk. Using medical-grade lasers in multiple treatments spaced out over several months, Dr. Walia helped improve the pliability of the patient's scar and ultimately increased the range of motion with better use of the prosthesis.

Dr. Walia, a fellowship-trained laser dermatologist with the Aesthetic and Dermatology Center in Rockville recalls, "The patient was appreciative and grateful for the opportunity to use the prosthesis more effectively. They told me 'I can actually play with my kids now.'"

There are many types of battle wounds and most people probably wouldn't consider a dermatologist as being on the front lines of helping to heal those wounds but that's right where Dr. Walia prefers to be.

Her husband is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force. "I am very proud of his service," she says. "As best as I can, I would like to give back to veterans who have done so much for our country. They are very special and they have sacrificed for our country. Many of the freedoms we enjoy in the United States today are due to their sacrifices."

With an emphasis on compassion, Dr. Walia puts her extensive training to use with the newest laser technology to improve the emotional well-being and quality of life for veterans, one patient at a time.

"I treat veterans' scars - from burns or explosive devices - at discounted rates," she adds. "To give back to them, as a way to thank them for their service."

For all patients – whether veterans or not – Dr. Walia begins by listening. "I treat each patient as a family member," she says. "Sometimes you can pick up a diagnosis by simply listening to what patients tell you. Then, I show compassion and present options and pros and cons. It's not me telling the patient what to do. We decide together how best to move forward. Do they want to initiate treatments that may be more aggressive, or a more conservative approach? It's a mutual respectful discussion."

The Aesthetic and Dermatology Center also includes Dr. Lawrence Green (an expert in psoriasis, among other things), an aesthetician and a clinical study department. Together, the team's specialties include devices such as Genius microneedling and Radiofrequency, LaseMD™ non-ablative fractional laser (for pigment issues), VBeam pulsed dye laser (for scars, burns, and spider veins) PRP (for hair loss, scars, and photo-rejuvenation)®, Botox and fillers, general medical dermatology, skincare, and chemical peels.

Dr. Walia chose her career path when a dermatologist changed her life by treating Dr. Walia's own childhood skin issues. "She dramatically improved my skin and my personality greatly changed and my overall emotional well-being improved," she recalls. "I thought: This is great. I would like to do this for someone else."

She's been recognized as a top dermatologist in the DMV every year since 2008 in Washingtonian magazine and U.S. News and World Report. In addition to Dr. Walia's efforts to help veterans, the practice offers free skin-cancer screenings, has done school outreach programs to educate kids about sunscreen, and has offered physician services to free medical clinics working with various non-profits.

More at **AestheticDermatologyMD.com**.

ARTICLE BY LAURI GROSS