

M.D. NEWS

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A photograph of four professionals standing in a modern office setting. From left to right: a man in a grey suit and red tie, a man in a dark pinstriped suit and red tie, a woman in a white and black striped shirt, and a woman in a dark pinstriped suit. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera. The background features large windows and a modern interior design.

The DeClaire Knee & Orthopaedic Institute

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By Annemarie Cronin

We rely unabashedly on our limbs, anticipating they will perform forever, expecting shoulders and arms to execute myriad daily tasks and knees to bend and hold our bodies erect. Seldom do we think of the limitation to daily life caused by impaired limbs.

Knees weaken with age and the insidious infiltration of disease. Osteoarthritis, the most common form of arthritis, can erode the joint cartilage through the simple wear and tear that results from constant motion and pressure to the knee joint itself. The patient, who at first may resort to limiting activities and — depending on pain medication — may eventually be driven to explore the surgical options available to remedy the problem.

At The DeClaire Knee & Orthopaedic Institute in Rochester Hills, MI, the resolution, rehabilitation and perfection of surgical techniques to resolve and repair degenerative knee disease and traumatic knee injury has evolved into a state-of-the-art emporium

for the specialized study and repair of the knee, as well as other orthopaedic cases.

In the time that spanned between his junior year in high school through his years at the University of Michigan, Jeffrey DeClaire, M.D., came to realize his mission. Now a board-certified and fellowship-trained orthopaedic surgeon, he is the founder and Director of The DeClaire Knee & Orthopaedic Institute. Having completed a surgical residency program at Wayne State University and an orthopaedic residency at University of Michigan hospitals, followed by a sports medicine fellowship at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, the vision of his future in orthopaedics became more clear. “Having worked with the athletes at UM and Penn State, I found that I liked athletics and sports medicine,” he says. “I was especially interested in the ability if necessary to treat people surgically or nonsurgically, and the medical and surgical proponents allowed for wider options in treatment.”



A period of working with Joe Paterno in college football helped to solidify his ambitions in orthopaedic medicine. “My goal was to be involved in athletic medicine, and to deliver the type of care that the elite athlete was accustomed to over to the general patient population. I understood from seeing how the athletes were treated that this protocol should be translated to the general public.”

Of the 900,000 total joint surgeries performed in the United States per year, 300,000 are hip repair, and the remaining 600,000 are knee surgeries. This figure is expected to increase by 673% by the year 2030. This staggering prediction equates to 3.5 million knee surgeries in the United States alone.

“My practice has evolved over the years,” he says. “I had a real interest in the knee, and as knee technology became more advanced with minimally invasive surgical procedures, I decided to focus my practice exclusively on knee surgery.”

Becoming involved in a great deal of teaching and education over the years led him to participate in an international surgeon tour program through which he is able to pass skills on to surgeons working in Holland, Japan, Korea, England, Australia, New Zealand and many other countries. As Chairman of the Department of Orthopaedics at Crittenton Hospital Medical Center, Dr. DeClaire was also instrumental in the development of the Crittenton Joint Replacement Center.

Three years ago, this led him to open The DeClaire Knee & Orthopaedic Institute. The outstanding architecture and luxurious interior 8,500-square-foot space with an adjoining 3,500-square-foot physical therapy suite speaks to the absolute latest trend of moving away from the hospital to a hospitality suite setting. Filling the center with every possible convenience and employing a staff rigorously trained to be patient focused and knowledgeable, every aspect of the institute has been profoundly well thought out and delivered.

The entry and cathedral ceiling vaulted waiting room would be the envy of many small boutique hotels. Built in a circle around the patient waiting room, the building’s huge glass windows are shade free, letting light spill into the examining and treatment rooms. The overarching principle that governs all that they do here is simple and evident in the delivery of care. Understanding that the immediacy of intervention and treatment is fundamental, Dr. DeClaire believes that the level afforded to the elite athlete, where getting back in the game as soon as possible is imperative, ought to be the gold standard for all patients. As time is important to everyone, treatment plans get underway immediately, with the ultimate goal of returning the patient to normal life as quickly as possible.

The assessment as to the best treatment protocol also plays an important role in patient care. Not all injuries are immediately slated for surgery, with many being treated nonsurgically through a multidisciplinary approach. This may include alternative physical therapy, medication and other modalities. “The challenge is in identifying the problem from the beginning,” says Dr. DeClaire.



PHOTOS BY JOSH BAND

“Will it get better on its own, or will it need surgery? The majority are handled without surgery,” he says.

Coming back to the issue of sports medicine, “the whole philosophy rests on treating the injury right away,” says Dr. DeClaire. Immediate access to the doctor, the institution of an immediate treatment plan with a team of health care workers and a continuity of care are the primary goals. At The DeClaire Knee & Orthopaedic Institute, the delivery of care is extremely patient focused. A protocol has been set that allows patients 24/7 access to someone in the office with expertise, knowledge and skills. “This allows us to



interact on an educational level and to critically evaluate the treatment protocols that we have implemented,” says Dr. DeClaire.

It is self evident from the first visit to The DeClaire Knee & Orthopaedic Institute that great care has been taken to put a superior team together. From the front desk, to the physical therapy room, to the medical/surgical team, each is a highly trained and experienced team member who shares in the common goal of delivering compassionate care. Attitude and work ethic mean everything here. “There is a huge trust factor here,” Dr. DeClaire explains. “In knee replacement surgery, the experience and technical skills are directly related to the success of the surgery,” says Dr. DeClaire.



Meredith Wood, PA-C, and Jeffrey DeClaire, M.D.

Jignesh Patel, D.O.; Shaunnah Yeihey, PA-C; Jeffrey DeClaire, M.D.; Meredith Wood, PA-C; Jeffrey Rybarczyk P.T., D.P.T., M.S.



“Being a specialist in the knee has allowed me to be at the forefront of the arthroscopic aspects of knee surgery, and being involved in education and clinical research, we continue ongoing assessments to improve on our technology and knowledge,” says Dr. DeClaire.

Jignesh Patel, D.O., who recently joined the practice was no stranger to Dr. DeClaire’s vision. Having worked together for some time before joining forces, Dr. Patel notes, “We share a common interest in joint replacement, but we also share a common interest in the overall musculoskeletal issues, whatever they may be.” Ultimately though, it was the surgical aspect of the practice and the benefit of working with a surgeon with more than 20 years of experience that enticed Dr. Patel to be part of the team.

During his medical training, Dr. Patel spent time at the trauma center at the University Medical Center in Las Vegas, which generated an interest in joint repair. Returning to do a fellowship specializing in hip, knee and shoulder replacement, he found that he enjoyed the instant gratification of fixing something that is going to work again in the future. Commenting on his work at The DeClaire Knee & Orthopaedic Institute, Dr. Patel points out, “Dr. DeClaire has modeled his practice on overall care and on making the patient feel good about the process.” Dr. Patel also notes, “Medicine as a model in our society has been gravitating towards this overall system of hospitality. You are



Meredith Wood, PA-C, with patient



Jignesh Patel, D.O., with patient



Jeffrey Rybarczyk, P.T., D.P.T., M.S., with patient

PHOTOS BY JOSH BAND

seeing shops and spas and restaurants in the new hospital model. It becomes part of a community. Dr. DeClaire understood that this model could be incorporated as well into a smaller, specialty practice.” He adds, “We stay up to date and are constantly examining and revising our techniques in surgery and postoperative care. This is augmented by collecting data on all our patients, which allows us to enter a wealth of data into the computer system. This allows a continual examination of the processes in

place.” Dr. Patel continues, “Another progressive and unique part of The DeClaire system is in focusing on pre- and postoperative rehabilitation.” While Dr. DeClaire limits his practice exclusively to the knee, Dr. Patel also does hip replacement, orthopaedic trauma, fracture care, musculoskeletal care and sports injuries.

Incorporated into the institute and adjoining the medical office is the physical therapy suite. Under the supervision of Director Jeffrey



Dr. DeClaire with patient



Dr. DeClaire with patient



Dr. DeClaire viewing results on the computer

As Dr. Rybarczyk points out, “This is a comprehensive, all-encompassing orthopaedic center. The medical evaluations are performed by two renowned surgeons and a topnotch medical staff. As physical therapists, we can walk next door and get the medical questions answered and patients’ needs addressed.”

The sheer volume of knee surgeries performed at the institute, whether initiated by injury, disease or revisions from prior failed knee surgeries or replacements has propelled the experience of Drs. DeClaire and Patel to a highly sophisticated level of proficiency. And as Dr. Rybarczyk points out, “The experience level is incomparable when you consider that, together, Dr. DeClaire and Dr. Patel perform over 100 cases each month.”


“My first responsibility is to make sure that each and every patient’s recovery is as progressive as possible. I oversee the quality of care to address and meet the needs of the patient,” he says.

Someone once said that during surgery, your body doesn’t know whether or not your surgeon went to Harvard, but it does recognize and respond to skill.

Ultimately, it’s the experience and skill of the surgeon that makes all the difference. ■

PHOTOS BY JOSH BAND

Rybarczyk, P.T., D.P.T., M.S., the physical therapy department is a state-of-the-art therapy clinic that has been cleverly arranged to create an environment with the feel of a spa. The staff move with the finesse of a concierge at a fine hotel and work effortlessly with the patients through their customized therapy regimens. The goal is simple. A highly sophisticated system encourages patient motivation, and treatment moves swiftly.



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