

CHAPTER 1

Preventative Cardiology

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“I’m motivated by the idea that humans are the most complex things in the world,” states Dr. Louis J. Scala regarding his career in health care. Dr. Scala is a practitioner with Cardiac Care Group LLC in Cape Coral, Fla. He specializes in the areas of preventative cardiology and molecular atherosclerosis. Dr. Scala is noted for his commitment to spending a good amount of time with each patient and is appreciated for his ability to do so while making sure he doesn’t fall behind in appointments. He truly enjoys creating systems that make seeing patients very streamlined. “One patient said to me, ‘You’re the only doctor that walks in on time,’” Dr. Scala notes, admitting, “There’s a significant effort put into place to make that happen.” His tactic is placing an emphasis on efficiency while paying close attention to detail. He understands that doctors cannot rush through their work, as rushing can lead to mistakes.

Dr. Scala believes that a truly effective physician/patient relationship will be beneficial to both parties. “The reward for me is when I interact with the patient on a personal level,” he says. The reward for the patient, he adds, is allowing a doctor to discover a medical issue before it turns into a life-threatening problem. Though Dr. Scala concentrates his medical practice in preventative cardiology, he knows how important it is to take into account all factors of a person’s health. “A lot of doctors tend to look at one thing and not the whole picture,” he explains. “You have to integrate the whole body, even when you’re a specialist.”

Dr. Scala knew that he wanted to become a doctor from the age of 4 years old. While in college, however, he conducted extensive research in molecular biology and nearly became a scientist instead. “I would say that my foundation in science has assisted me in being a good physician,” he reveals. Dr. Scala obtained a Bachelor of Science in biochemistry from the University at Buffalo and an M.D. from SUNY Downstate Medical Center. He also completed a residency at Brown University and a fellowship at Cedars-Sinai Hospital (UCLA). Furthermore,

Dr. Scala is board-certified and specializes in cardiovascular disease. He has given many talks over the years having to do with anti-lipid therapy and the management of acute coronary artery disease.

Dr. Scala has also had a number of mentors over the years who have affected his practice of medicine. These include David Rekosh, who taught Dr. Scala how to do molecular cloning while he was a student at the University at Buffalo, and David Bolton, who works for the Institute for Basic Research in Developmental Disabilities in Staten Island, N.Y., and guided Dr. Scala when he first started researching molecular biology. Dr. Scala shares that he also received positive guidance from Charles Carpenter, who was chief of medicine at Brown University when Dr. Scala was completing his residency.

Having now practiced medicine for more than two decades, Dr. Scala remains enthusiastic and challenged by his chosen profession. “Science always moves forward,” Dr. Scala shares. “It’s amazing how difficult it is to follow molecular genetics. The sequencing of the human genome is now affecting how we treat people and how we use molecular genetics to shape people’s therapeutic plans, which is a significant change in the past 30 years.”

There have been some changes in the health care field that haven’t been so positive, however. Health care providers are becoming increasingly frustrated by insurance companies and government agencies that seek to limit and regulate the way physicians can treat patients. Additionally, as a solo practitioner, Dr. Scala now must fight to stay afloat in a system that caters to health care corporations. He fears that the quality of care will be negatively affected by these changes and that young people will be discouraged from entering the medical field. However, he is passionate about remaining in private practice and seeing Cardiac Care Group LLC thrive. He would like to bring in another physician and transfer his knowledge to others. “My goal is to pass on the information that I’ve learned to someone else,” he says.