

Spotlight on Small Business

A year into COVID-19, Dr. William Leone, MD has adapted for and with his patients

By Tim Wassberg
tim@newpelican.com

The need to be resilient during this pandemic and move forward applies to many businesses.

But the healthcare industry has been particularly affected, especially when it comes to non-critical surgeries.

Dr. William Leone, MD of the Leone Center For Orthopedic Care in Fort Lauderdale, has seen patients through this storm.

Dr. Leone says that the past year has been one of the hardest of his entire career, one where non-life threatening injuries are going untreated and creating “an incredible amount of hardship” for patients and their loved ones.

“If you’re with your spouse or your kid or your parent and you see how much pain they’re in and they can’t walk and be active, the whole thing hurts,” he said.

At the onset of the pandemic, Dr. Leone shut down completely for two months, and many patients have been afraid to come back. But with the advent of telehealth and other adjustments, “I could not be more proud and confident with how well we’ve handled this. And now, finally, what I’m seeing a year into this thing, in the last month, is a lot more people wanting to come back, because so many more people are getting vaccinated.”

A lot of factors have helped, which reflects Dr. Leone’s spirit of innovation and patient education.

Telehealth, which he initially didn’t think was going to work well, allowed him to see a patient’s X-rays and medical

Dr. William Leone, MD
The Leone Center for
Orthopedic Care
1000 NE 56 St.
Fort Lauderdale
954-489-4575
holycrossleonecenter.com



Dr. Leone explains his process for hip surgery that encourages faster recovery as he holds an example of a hip. [Tim Wassberg]

information ahead of time. “So when I speak to them, I feel like I already know them. And then we get to look each other in the eye [via video], and I hear their story. We talk about what their needs are, what their goals are and what their fears are.”

He cites a 54-year-old man who had been a stockbroker for over 30 years, and then bought a truck business in Charlotte. The man met Dr. Leone online and when it came time for surgery, drove here in his motor home and will rehab in it.

It’s a story Dr. Leone loves to tell.

The pandemic has also adjusted other procedures, allowing for a quicker recovery in some patients. “One of the things that COVID pushed me into changing is the



Dr. William Leone in his office at the Leone Center For Orthopedic Care in Fort Lauderdale. [Tim Wassberg]

number of people that just go home almost immediately after surgery. There is a group that needs to be in the hospital [post-op] but it’s maybe 20 percent or less.” One example deals with spinal anesthesia. “That’s worked out perfectly. We give these local injections so after surgery they’re in very little pain,” he said.

Another area Dr. Leone has been integrating, beyond his knee surgery approaches, is minimizing any amount of impact on surrounding tissue and an “emphasis on being minimally invasive.”

Dr. Leone uses a technique called SPAIRE [Spare Piriformis And Internus, Repair Externus].

“What it’s doing - as you can read in my blog, holycrossleonecenter.com - is

creating an interval between the capsule and the external rotators. At the end of the day, I’m not taking down the external rotators. I’m repairing the capsule anatomically. And so, as a result, patients are not restricted in how they move or how they sleep or how they bend . . . all the ‘hip precautions’ [post surgery] have pretty much gone away.”

But more diverse than the various kinds of procedures are the people.

“I take care of people at all ends of the spectrum. I met a really cool 86-year-old who was a competitive powerlifter and still holds the world record for bench-pressing 465 pounds at age 72,” Dr. Leone said. “You meet cool people with diverse stories.”