



JOURNEY OF CARE

Hansa Medical Groupe is committed to a high-touch level of compassionate, patient-centered care in its treatment of senior patients.

WORDS BY TRICIA DESPRES

Longtime Glenview resident Claudia Baker was a wife, a mother and a cherished grandmother. She was an avid golfer and loved going to church, and yes, she could give anyone a run for their money playing bridge. In her free time, she served as a volunteer for organizations such as Meals on Wheels and the Boys and Girls Club in her second home of Naples, Florida.

“She was always vibrant and full of life,” remembers Baker’s daughter Jennifer Preston. “She was just always that kind of person.” But just three days before her 76th birthday, her life ended after a valiant battle against Corticobasal Degeneration and Progressive Supranuclear Palsy.

“It was a death sentence from the moment we got the diagnosis,” explains the Glenview resident. “There was no hope that she would be able to beat this.”

The final three months of her life were spent juggling diagno-

ses and medications, hospice teams, and insurance jargon. But it wasn’t until Wilmette internist Dr. Chirag Patel walked into Baker’s room at a North Shore assisted living community that Preston and her family finally began to realize that the final journey of her life could be one filled with dignity and respect.

“I remember calling (Dr. Patel) on a Sunday around noon and he was in my mom’s room by 6 pm meeting with her and helping her understand the disease,” recalls Preston. “He helped us understand and appreciate the role he could play in this journey.”

From that moment on, Dr. Patel became a crucial member of Baker’s care team, often providing as much emotional support as medical guidance.

“He was just the most compassionate and devoted person to my mom,” explains Preston. “He was so loving and so very interested in her story. It was as if he treated her like his own mom.”

It’s this philosophy of medicine that is seldom seen these days,

PUBLISHER'S PROFILE



Claudia Baker

especially as pre-existing conditions, intense regulations, and prescription costs make it that much more difficult. In fact, Dr. Patel says that the medical field in which he signed up for is greatly different than what many of his peers are doing at this point.

"Sometimes I feel as if the global experience of healthcare by patients and providers is one of frustration," explains Dr. Patel, who currently works as managing partner at Hansa Medical Groupe.

"There are so many issues to handle in the medical field, besides caring for the patient. Things like insurance variations, prior authorizations, and electronic medical records charting has bogged down part of the healthcare system. As far as I am concerned, the ideas of communication and empathy with patients has been lost by healthcare professionals due to the current turmoil of practicing medicine. Hence, the quality of care gets compromised, increasing my own and my peers' frustration level."

But for Dr. Patel, he is committed to changing the way he himself spends his days in medicine. With more than 20 years in practice, his staff now focuses much of their care within the senior communities in which his patients reside, leaving them with better control of his day-to-day practice. The practice specializes in geriat-

rics, neuro cognitive diseases, geri-psych/behavioral medicine, and many of the other common health issues that seniors contend with.

"We control how many patients we see, which allows us to spend more time with them and have the ability to be much more sensitive to the family who is going through all of this right along with the patient," he says. "We train our staff to focus, not only on providing great quality medical care, but also the delivery of that care."

"He wasn't looking to make rash decisions," adds Preston. "He was the kind of doctor you could text from morning till night. He wanted to stay intimately involved in everything that had to do with the wellbeing of my mom. He took an interest and care in everything."

As the family prepares to head into their first holiday season without their mom by their side, Preston says she feels blessed to have Dr. Patel now as a part of their family. And for Dr. Patel, the role he played in the life of Claudia Baker makes him and his staff want to continue serving his patients in every way.

"I didn't solve anything for Claudia," he says quietly. "I didn't cure her disease. But I was there. I held her hand. I talked to Claudia's kids and husband. And to me, that was a valuable part of her treatment and my journey with them."

Dr. Chirag Patel is Senior Managing Partner at Hansa Medical Groupe, which services patients residing in senior communities/facilities located on the North Shore and in the Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana area. For more information, call 847-920-0902 or visit hansamedicalgroupe.com.