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Family doctor offers home pediatric visits

By Sophie Braccini



Dr. Sheriff and her daughter talk health and nutrition at the Orinda farmers' market. Photos Sophie Braccini

systems, risking the loss of personalized care, and in her realm of pediatrics, reducing emphasis in preventive care, something that she sees as key.

When her family moved to California two years ago she decided it was the opportunity to redefine her career, and practice the medicine that she loves. She chose to go it alone rather than join an existing practice because she wanted to follow the holistic approach she finds the most healing. According to Sheriff, insurance companies push for doctors to limit their interaction with patients to a maximum of 10 to 25 minutes. During this limited time doctors must complete all the history as well as the checkup, in addition to addressing any concerns the patient might have and offering guidance.

She said that she met some great professionals when working for existing practices, but she often found herself going over time, unable to spend all the time she wanted with her patients. She decided to step out of the box.

She says that what makes Olive Leaf Pediatrics unique is that all the well-child and newborn visits, and all the acute visits can be done in the home. The appointments are usually 30 minutes to an hour long, sometimes an hour and a half for a newborn. Sheriff can have additional discussions about nutrition and fitness, or even positive discipline training, if parents want advice in these areas. She also touches upon mindfulness if the parents are interested in discussing it. The parents have access to her directly when needed. "It's like having a pediatrician in your pocket," she says, adding that she will keep her practice at 150 patients to be sure to stay available.

The doctor has structured her business practice by having patients pay either an annual or monthly fee per child that gives them unlimited access to her. If patients have PPO insurance she provides them a super bill that they submit to their insurance for reimbursement. For those who are not sure about becoming members she also has a service-based fee.

Born in Pakistan, Sheriff moved to the U.S. with her parents when she was 5 years old. Her mother is a pharmacist and her father a CPA. The mother of two children, ages 9 and 7, Sheriff does not do a lot in terms of self-promotion, but she sometimes has a table at the Orinda farmers' market where she disseminates information, and she conducts children's activities, such as planting seeds of edible flowers.

You can find more information about Sheriff and her practice at www.oliveleafpeds.com.

Dr. Nazia Sheriff's young patients do not have far to go to see her. Sheriff's practice, Olive Leaf Pediatrics, goes everywhere the doctor goes - in the patients' home - the best way, according to the young practitioner, to take the time needed to deliver holistic pediatric care.

Sheriff travels around Lamorinda with her treatment and diagnostic bags, which contain all the equipment she needs to examine, perform tests and administer basic treatment to her young patients. "It's literally your doctor's office brought to you," she says. The bags are not that big but they contain everything Sheriff needs, such as a breathing treatment machine, basic antibiotics, creams, a weight scale, an audioscope, as well as tools to take blood pressure or temperature, and more.

Sheriff has been a pediatrician for 10 years. She started her career working in a Chicago hospital, in the pediatric ICU. But she began to question the system where family doctors were being replaced by more administrative



Dr. Sheriff with her medicine bag on her way to see a patient

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