

Dr. Odin De Los Reyes

For Southbury Podiatrist, Patients Are the Best Teachers

by Ehlayna Napolitano

SOUTHURY — A small, homey podiatry practice, headed and run by just one doctor and his wife, is nestled in a small back-corner office in Building 1 of the Pomperaug Office Park.

A patient walks in and greets the doctor familiarly and calls him “the greatest.” Another woman enters several minutes later and she and the doctor exchange jokes and stories before she is ushered into her room for her appointment.

Over the last 17 years at the Southbury practice, the patients that walk through the propped-open door of Dr. Odin De Los Reyes’ practice have taught him a lot, not just about their own lives but about his own career as well.

“They call it a practice because you are learning while you practice,” Dr. De Los Reyes said. “[You] probably learn more in owning the practice, working the practice than you do in school or residency.”

The patients are not the only ones he points to as having taught him memorable lessons and skills. Dr. De Los Reyes said he has had mentors over the years and colleagues who have been positive influences on his life, that have helped him advance his own career.

In return, he said, he has tried to do the same for new practitioners.

Dr. De Los Reyes began his career in Connecticut after taking a job in Meriden as an associate with a doctor who had graduated from Des Moines University.

After a hand injury proved serious enough to require surgery which prevented Dr. Michael Palladino, a doctor he worked with and who he called “a great mentor,” from practicing further, Dr. De Los Reyes was offered the chance to purchase the Southbury location and start his own practice. He took it. “I still remember all the nice things he did for me,” he said.

For 16 years, Dr. De Los Reyes has been working out of the office in Southbury, serving various needs in the community for a wide range of patients from infants to the elderly. One major focus of Dr. De Los Reyes’ has been diabetic foot care, he said, which has become a focus for podiatrists across the nation. she said.

Diabetes is the leading cause of amputations in the United States, he



could significantly reduce the number of necessary amputations and save the healthcare field billions of dollars currently used for amputations, hospital stays and post-amputation care, according to Dr. De Los Reyes.

Dr. De Los Reyes also offers Noveon laser services for fungus removal. According to Carol De Los Reyes, the practice’s office manager, it is the only practice in the immediate area offering this service. Most other podiatric services and procedures can be done in the Southbury office, though Dr. De Los Reyes does not perform major surgeries, she said.

Ms. De Los Reyes said that Dr. De Los Reyes has a “great bedside manner” that sets him apart from many other doctors. Part of Dr. De Los Reyes’ philosophy was shaped by Dr. Palladino, who imparted a lesson to spend meaningful time with each patient and make the effort not to rush through visits, he said.

“We’re hurried, you know, having to get to the next patient so often that sometimes we’re not listening to them, we’re just thinking about the next patient or doing our notes.

“But” he said, “Odin, you[’ve] got to really focus on them and try to hear their problems and treat them, make them feel that they’re your only patient.”

Outside of the office, Dr. and Mrs. De Los Reyes have two daughters and two dogs and enjoy eating and traveling, Dr. De Los Reyes said. His oldest daughter is expecting their first grandchild.

Still, podiatry is a major focus of Dr. De Los Reyes’ time, even outside the practice, as he is engaged with several organizations that work to advance the concerns, causes and efforts of the podiatry profession and community.

In Connecticut, Dr. De Los Reyes has participated in the Connecticut Podiatric Medical Association since 2005, “an organization dedicated to serving its membership through education, public awareness and government representation,” its website states.

“I joined initially because other people on the board thought that I would be a good contributor to the board,” he said. “I never thought that I would move up the chain.”

“What the CPMA does is basically provides one voice for the 300 podiatrists here in Connecticut to talk to organizations like the government, state and federal, to hospitals, to other medical societies, specialties,” Dr. De Los Reyes explained.

Most recently, Dr. De Los Reyes served as the organization’s president. In culmination of his time there, he was recently awarded the organization’s John D. Walker Podiatrist of the Year Award.

“It was a very rewarding night, it was a nice culmination to working on the board,” he said.

Dr. De Los Reyes also plays a more national role on the podiatry scene as the American Podiatric Medical Association PAC coordinator. In this role, Dr. De Los Reyes works to advance legislation that is in the interest of the podiatrists or their patients, he said. This means working to “bend the ear” of legislators and trying to advance their interests, he said.

“Part of what we do is every year we have to go down [to Washington, D.C.] and we have to speak with each of our congress people and two senators,” he said, which means seven people in two days for Dr. De Los Reyes and another podiatrist.

“It’s a lot fun,” he said.

His biggest accomplishment in this role, which he will retain and he said he enjoys, is his work with the HELLPP Act, the Help Ensure Life- and Limb-Saving Access to Podiatric Physicians Act, which when he came on as chairman had no co-signers from Connecticut. Now, he said, all five of the state House representatives have signed on to the bill.

“When I became coordinator in 2010, we had nobody from our state who co-sponsored that bill,” he said. “The bill has not passed, it has to be constantly brought up, every two years.

“But it’s important to get co-sponsors because the more co-sponsors you have, the more chance it has to go to the floor and then it can be voted on.”

“I thought that was a big accomplishment,” he said.

Now, he said, working to get Senators Richard Blumenthal and Chris Murphy on board will be the next challenge.

Dr. De Los Reyes has a second office in New Britain. Appointments for both offices may be made online or by phone at 203-405-4025 for the Southbury office and 860-331-8517 for the New Britain office.

Those seeking further information about the Southbury office may call 203-262-6100.