

# THE DOC IS IN

## A LOCAL DOCTOR'S TRANSITION TO A RETAINER-BASED PRACTICE

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*"I love that I have been able to help people"*

**Dr.** Frank Mazza knew early that he wanted to be a doctor. After completing his 3-year residency at Memorial Southwest in Houston he dove right in to what he loved – helping patients achieve a happy and healthy life. After years of chasing time and playing catch up during appointments, Dr. Mazza changed his entire approach to medicine – and he has never looked back!

After three years of being employed, Dr. Mazza purchased a private practice in Sugar Land. With two fellow colleagues, he ran a traditional family practice. However, in 2005 he questioned everything he had done up until that point.

*"I became very dissatisfied with the amount of time I had to spend with my patients and I fought the system because I knew the patients wanted more time," says Dr. Mazza.*

*"I found myself continuously apologizing for running late." He refers to it as a hamster wheel, a never ending chase that only continues to go faster and faster. Tired and overwhelmed, Dr. Mazza considered giving up medicine entirely and pursuing his childhood dream of attending law school. Maybe that young boy who watched countless law shows, Perry Mason in particular, was on to something. "I was looking to completely transition," reflects Mazza. "But something inside of me just was not quite ready to give up the white coat."*

At the suggestion of his colleague, Dr. Mazza considered another approach. Retainer-based medicine, another style of practice originating in the Northwest, tends to focus on quality not quantity. After a month of researching and praying, Mazza decided it was a worthwhile venture and converted the practice later that year.

**What is a retainer-based approach?** This model limits the number of patients cared for by any one doctor allowing for more personalized and timely care. This is sometimes referred to as a retainer-based medicine or boutique medicine but the term concierge best describes the services the patients of this practice receive. Many traditional family practices operate on rapid fire, where patients are allowed one question and ten minutes max, all after spending at least an hour in the waiting room. Concierge practices make sure their patients know that their time is just as valuable as the doctor's. While traditional family practices generally acquire anywhere from 2,000 to 2,500 patients, concierge practices generally max between 300 and 700 patients. This allows for same day or next day appointments and generally little to no time spent in the waiting room.

At Dr. Mazza's office the patient determines the length of the appointment. In fact, he requires a minimum of 30 minutes. When the patient calls in they are also asked what

their appointment is concerning. "This gives me the flexibility to research and really be the patients quarterback," notes Mazza. This extra appointment time allows for him to better understand his patient's history, lifestyle and specific needs. Another perk of the system, Dr. Mazza is able to be reached by his patients 24 hours a day 7 days a week. And just like an old fashioned doctor, he makes house calls! Something that sets Mazza's practice apart from others is that he admits his own patients to the hospital. "The hospital staff is not nearly as in tune to their patients as their primary care doctor is," shares Dr. Mazza. "When my patients are really ill, I think it makes a difference when they see their primary care physician in the hospital working alongside and being a good liaison between them and their family." When it comes down to it, it is an old school practice that puts the patient first each and every time.

Having established the type of practice that suited him, Dr. Mazza was ready to open his own private practice. When he found a building in the historic section of downtown Richmond he knew he had found his new home. He moved into the former First Community Bank building on June 22 of this year. After months of renovation, Dr. Mazza was able to incorporate some of the latest technology while still preserving the rustic and historic feel of the location. The exposed original brick and large wood doors add character and country charm. "Richmond has been so welcoming and supportive," Mazza says. "The town's historic feel and quaint nature was what drew him to the area, but it is the wonderful people who have made the move worthwhile."

Dr. Mazza also offers personal training to clients. His wife, Bridget Mazza, a certified personal trainer, and her partner Richard Scoby, work alongside Dr. Mazza and monitor patients workout regimes and overall progress. Mazza goes on to say, "Our lives and our jobs are becoming more sedentary and it is now showing up in our older generations who do not have the strength they should." He wants this to be a place where his elderly patients feel comfortable going. Here they can focus on core strength as well as balance and gait issues in order to prevent future falls. With only one to two people working out at any given time, it is a very personalized experience.

*"I love that I have been able to help people in this fashion," says Mazza. "I have never again thought about a change of careers!"*

While his free time is limited, Dr. Mazza enjoys golfing and running marathons. As a father of three daughters, family time is a must in his book. Having chosen a concierge style practice, Dr. Mazza gives more of himself and his time than ever before, but admits that it is worth the sacrifice. With a small dedicated staff at his side, Dr. Frank Mazza is able to practice medicine the way he feels his patients deserve. ★

TO CONTACT DR. MAZZA'S OFFICE GO TO: [CONCIERGEMEDICINEANDWELLNESS.COM](http://CONCIERGEMEDICINEANDWELLNESS.COM)