

SOUTHERN ROCKY MOUNTAIN

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MDNEWS

■ A BUSINESS & PRACTICE MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE | ABOUT PHYSICIANS | FROM PHYSICIANS | FOR PHYSICIANS ■

THE FUTURE OF HEALTH CARE

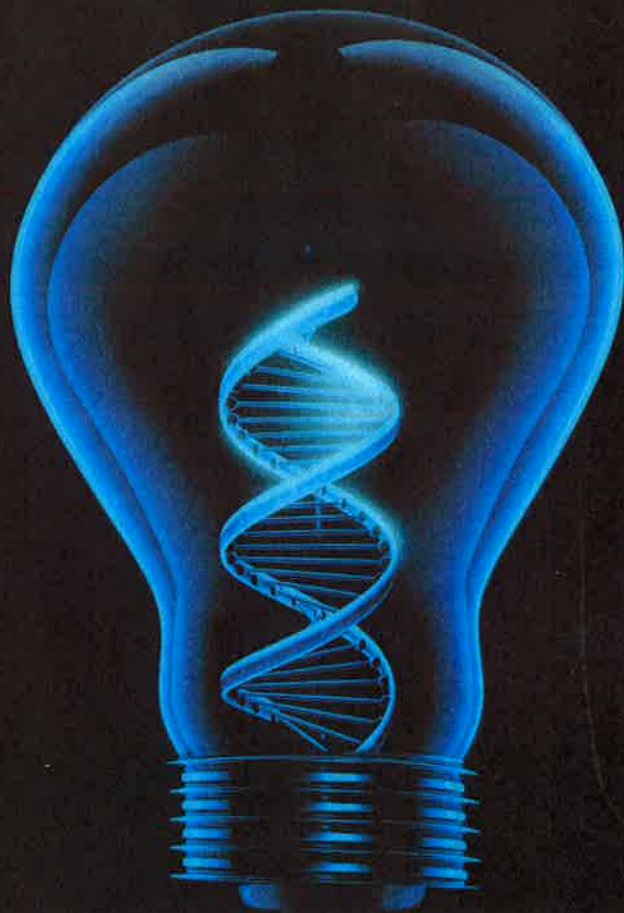
INNOVATION

and Technology

**Watson: The
Artificial Intelligence
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Q & A



Gordon F. Gibbs, M.D.
Founder and Medical Director,
Rocky Mountain Vein Institute

Q What role are you or your organization playing in developing or implementing innovations in health care?

A: Rocky Mountain Vein Institute (RMVI) works hard to provide innovative care through minimally invasive medical procedures, fast and accurate diagnosis, and concierge care of our patients. We believe staying involved in research is critical to innovation. The RMVI team is involved in a clinical trial to bring new, less invasive technology to mainstream vein care. Newer technologies can be less painful than current endovenous laser and radiofrequency ablation. Data from this research will help establish whether the new treatment is equally effective at treating vein disease.

I serve on the teaching faculty and meet with research and development teams for one of the largest vascular companies in the United States. RMVI is assisting with the development of new products and fostering new ideas to bring better treatment modalities to full clinical use. We believe our efforts to stay current with leaders in the field allow RMVI to provide better care for our patients.

Finally, the way we treat our patients — from the first phone call, throughout their in-office care and to the last appointment — is truly special. We provide concierge care, where the patients' needs are put first, and their comfort, satisfaction and successful outcomes are priority.

Q What is the most innovative development taking place within the local health care landscape?

A: Hospitals and clinics are consolidating efforts into a more streamlined approach to health care — with meaningful use of electronic health records and integrated health care networks — to provide more cost-effective medical care. At RMVI, we have multiple clinics, doctors from diverse training backgrounds, mid-level providers and expert vascular sonographers — all of whom create a team approach to diagnosis and treatment of vein disease. Combined with state-of-the-art electronic health records, the highest quality ultrasound equipment and an evidence-based approach, RMVI mirrors the cost-effective model of

health care delivered by larger integrated hospital networks.

Q Looking back, what is the most innovative medical technique or technology you have seen in health care in the last decade?

A: Percutaneous endovascular approaches to venous and arterial disease are the most innovative development to influence vascular care in the last decade. As technology has progressed and new products are released, a physician's ability to treat vascular disease using a minimally invasive technique has increased immensely. A nick in the skin and an outpatient procedure have now replaced traditional surgical incisions and inpatient hospitalizations for much of what we do in vascular care.

Because of endovascular techniques, a vast majority of venous disease treatments are now office-based procedures that are commonly done under only local anesthesia and in under an hour. Most venous patients return immediately to normal activity with minimal postprocedure pain.

Q Looking ahead, what medical innovation excites you the most for its potential effect on patient care, and why?

A: Most patients with venous disease have a very treatable condition and can expect a great outcome following treatment. However, some patients with deep venous thrombosis (DVT) can develop long-standing swelling and pain related to damaged venous valves. This condition, called postthrombotic syndrome, can be very challenging to treat. Many of these chronic debilitating symptoms can be avoided by treating acute DVT more aggressively. Newer catheter-based techniques allow the clot to be cleared from inside the vessel much more easily than in the past. This procedure, called pharmacomechanical thrombolysis, quickly restores blood return by dissolving and eliminating the clot. It also protects the venous valve function and minimizes potential for chronic debilitating symptoms related to postthrombotic syndrome. Even more exciting, in some cases, aggressive thrombolysis cases can be

treated on an outpatient basis. Only a few years ago, an ICU admission was required.

Q In your opinion, what impact will the health care reform initiative have on innovation?

A: There is a serious problem providing cost-effective health care in the United States. Innovation is essential to eliminate this problem. Innovation on a technical level will bring better, more cost-effective ways of treating disease. Innovation within the Legislature will help leaders navigate through a difficult political dynamic and help create solutions despite the strong presence of competing special interest groups.

Q What other factors do you feel are influencing innovation in health care?

A: Unfortunately, many great ideas for new products and disease treatment never come to fruition because the product manufacturer feels it cannot make a profit. Product manufacturers are forced to primarily consider the profitability of their new products over the clinical implications. Similarly, innovative second- and third-generation design improvements are often never brought to fruition because of research and development expense without a corresponding increase in product sales.

Q Why are you so passionate about health care?

A: I am passionate about health care because I know our team at RMVI can make a significant difference in a person's life. Making just one person look and feel better has a ripple effect and can touch so many other people. Improving someone's quality of life through superior patient care can make that person more active and thereby more healthy and fit. A healthy, fit person is often happier, and their relationships with friends and family are enhanced. I am passionate because we can have that kind of reach into someone's health. Vein disease causes swelling, pain, restlessness, cramping and other symptoms sometimes assumed to be a necessary part of aging. Often a person has no idea how much better his

or her legs can feel and do not know that treatment is medically indicated and covered by insurance. With contemporary, high-quality ultrasound, diagnosis is inexpensive and straightforward. Our minimally invasive approach can provide an elegant treatment plan that is very well tolerated and makes an immediate difference in a patient's quality of life. It's extremely gratifying to provide that kind of benefit.

Q Do you have a personal motto?
A: 'Always we begin again.'
— St. Benedict

Q What is the best career advice you have received?
A: If you do what you love, you never work a day in your life.

Q What or who inspired you to pursue a health care career?
A: My parents and grandparents. All were involved in medicine, medical research and health care.

Q What aspect of modern clinical care, in your opinion, has made the greatest difference in the lives of the most people?
A: High-quality diagnostic imaging and minimally invasive procedures.

Q In general, do you think patients today are better informed about health topics than in earlier times? Why or why not?

A: Yes, there is so much access to health information now through multimedia — TV, Internet and print publications — and easier access to experts and research.

Q What message about health and wellness do you most wish to communicate to your patients?

A: Everything in moderation.

Q If you watch any television programs with medical themes, which is your favorite, and why?

A: Most medical TV shows are more about the soap opera than the medicine. If I'm watching TV, I prefer to watch movies with my family or watch sports.

Q If you had not entered the health care field, what occupation do you think you might have pursued?

A: I'd be an entrepreneur.

Q What are your hobbies and interests?

A: I love spending time with my wife and three children. We ski, hike, waterski, travel and play tennis. Mostly, just time together is cherished.

Q What is the key to being successful?
A: Work harder and smarter than everyone else.

Q What is the best advice you've been given?
A: Be nice.

Q What has been your biggest lesson learned?
A: You are never too old to learn something new.

Q What motivates you each day?
A: The brown food group: Chocolate, coffee, cola, brownies, raw sugar ... Just kidding. What really motivates me is knowing that I can make a positive difference in our world during my lifetime. One person's actions do matter. I am motivated to do the best for my wife and children, my patients and my community.

GORDON F. GIBBS, M.D.

DR. GIBBS IS founder of and Chief Medical Executive at Rocky Mountain Vein Institute. He is a Mayo Clinic-trained interventionalist, board certified in phlebology and diagnostic radiology, and fellowship trained in vascular/interventional radiology. He is an active member in the American College of Phlebology and the Society of Interventional Radiology. Dr. Gibbs is Medical Director of Diagnostic and Interventional Radiology at St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center in Pueblo, CO. Dr. Gibbs is married and has three children. He is an avid skier and tennis player. He loves to climb Colorado's 14ers with his sons, and when he can get his 4-year-old daughter away from ponies and princesses, he'll have her hiking to the top mountains, too.

Q & A



Kristina Sanchez, M.D.
Staff
Phlebologist,
Rocky
Mountain Vein
Institute

Q What role are you or your organization playing in developing or implementing innovations in health care?

A: Currently, Rocky Mountain Vein Institute is providing the most advanced care available for patients who suffer from clinical manifestations of venous insufficiency. As specialty-trained physicians, we are best suited to provide the appropriate care and healing that each patient deserves.

Q What is the most innovative development taking place within the local health care landscape?

A: Outside our specialty — vein disease — the most innovative development taking place within Pueblo and southern Colorado is the growth of the Dorcy Cancer Center. Building on its mission to provide the most personal and comprehensive cancer care, the center is utilizing the Trilogy linear accelerator for radiation therapy, as well as the newest software technology, IMPAC, which is a radiation oncology electronic medical record.

Q Looking back, what is the most innovative medical technique or technology you have seen in health care in the last decade?

A: Certainly, the most innovative medical techniques have been image-

guided, catheter-based procedures. In phlebology, we can now treat patients with far less invasive approaches and physical discomfort, which translates to a healthier recovery with less time away from family, home and work.

Q Looking ahead, what medical innovation excites you the most for its potential effect on patient care, and why?

A: Providing outpatient procedural medical care in a doctor's office setting is really exciting. There is less associated time and monetary expense — as well as less worry on the patients' behalf — when eliminating a hospital admission.

Q In your opinion, what impact will the health care reform initiative have on innovation?

A: As I see it, health care reform is aimed at giving the greatest percentage of the population the greatest access to health care. While admirable, it places additional burden for financing health care on a government that can't readily afford it. There is additional weight also placed on members of the medical community who already spend a large portion of the day on paperwork and making sure they are regulation and insurance compliant, rather than being able to focus on the art of healing.

Q What other factors do you feel are influencing innovation in health care?

A: New knowledge drives innovation, thus it is vital that research dollars continue to flow to leading universities, laboratories and physicians who conduct studies that provide important advances in health care.

Q Why are you so passionate about health care?

A: I am passionate about being a medical provider because it gives me the privilege and ability to help improve the health of an individual, with the greater impact of that reaching beyond that individual to families and thereby a community.

Q Do you have a personal motto?

A: It is simply to remember to be thankful for the small things in life.

Q What is the best career advice you have received?

A: My parents always encouraged me to do what I love and love what I do.

Q What or who inspired you to pursue a health care career?

A: I was inspired by my grandfather, Dr. Marvin VandenBosch. He was dedicated to providing culturally sensitive care to a medically underserved community.

Q What aspect of modern clinical care, in your opinion, has made the greatest difference in the lives of the most people?

A: Definitely, access to health infor-

mation has made the greatest difference in the lives of most people.

Q In general, do you think patients today are better informed about health topics than in earlier times? Why or why not?

A: Patients today have vast amounts of health information at their fingertips and are therefore more informed. A thorough discussion with a health care provider about that information remains a necessity, however, to sort through the clinically relevant data. This leads to better health care decisions.

Q What message about health and wellness do you most wish to communicate to your patients?

A: Finding a healthy physical, spiritual and emotional balance in life will carry you far on the path to wellness.

Q If you watch television programs with medical themes, which is your favorite, and why?

A: I love the show "Scrubs" because it pokes fun at people in medicine and it makes me laugh every time.

Q If you had not entered the health care field, what occupation do you think you might have pursued?

A: I would have pursued a creative career in the arts, such as interior design or wedding cake designing and decorating.

Q What are your hobbies and interests?

A: I enjoy traveling, great wine,

reading books, baking and keeping in touch with old friends.

Q What is the key to being successful?

A: Being honest with yourself about what makes you happy.

Q What has been your biggest lesson learned?

A: That making mistakes is important to growth and success.

Q What motivates you each day?

A: Having a renewed opportunity to make a difference, especially for my children and family, but also for the people I see day to day in the clinic.

KRISTINA SANCHEZ, M.D.

DR. SANCHEZ HAS been working with Rocky Mountain Vein Institute (RMVI) since January 2010. Board certified in family practice, she has focused much of her career on women's health since earning her medical degree from the University of New Mexico School of Medicine in Albuquerque, NM. She completed her residency at Southern Colorado Family Medicine in Pueblo, CO.

She is an active member of the American College of Phlebology and of the American Academy of Family Physicians. In addition to her work at RMVI, she provides valuable health care services at the Colorado Mental Health Institute at Pueblo. Dr. Sanchez lives in Pueblo with her husband and two children.