

DIAGNOSTIC CENTERS OF AMERICA OFFERS THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY IN A RELAXING ATMOSPHERE

STORY BY LAUREN MIRÓ ■ PHOTOS BY ABNER FEDRAZA

For world-class care when it's needed most, Diagnostic Centers of America offers the best in advanced technology, comfort and care. Owner and CEO Steve Shullman opened the first of the center's three locations in Delray Beach 20 years ago. Shullman is a certified public accountant with an expertise in business growth. He ran several high-end businesses before discovering a lack of quality in available diagnostic centers at the time.

"I always felt there was a need for a high-quality facility," Shullman recalled. "Back in the '90s when we started this, the average facility had very old equipment, the level of service just wasn't there. I felt that we could bring in some very high-quality equipment, a good radiology group and bring the imaging to a different level from what it was."

In 1992, he opened Diagnostic Centers of America. At the time it was a small operation that primarily focused on nuclear stress tests. Shullman's penchant for high-quality services helped DCA expand into what it is today.

Aside from the Delray Beach location, Diagnostic Centers of America has offices in Boynton Beach and Wellington. The Boynton Beach office opened in 2004, while the Wellington location opened in November of last year. In Wellington, DCA's facility is located near the Mall at Wellington Green.

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(Background) The CT scan machine at DCA Wellington.

(Left inset) Diagnostic Centers of America CEO Steve Shullman and COO Alan Shullman.

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Elisa Stirling with the Hologic Selenia digital mammography machine.

Michele Sanchez on the CT scan machine at DCA Wellington with technician Tammy Anderson.

forced other competitors to also start raising the bar. And you didn't have that in this area."

Shullman believes that the up-to-date technology available at Diagnostic Centers of America will be a significant benefit for the community. "Hopefully it will get everyone in the community to think about upping their levels," he said.

Diagnostic Centers of America is equipped for the full spectrum of diagnostic testing including MRA/MRI, Molecular HD PET/CT, bone density, digital radiology, nuclear cardiology, electrocardiogram, CT/CTA, echocardiography and nuclear medicine. They also offer women's imaging such as digital mammography and ultrasound/breast/ob-gyn.

The only thing more striking than the world-class technology offered at the center is its spa-like atmosphere. The recessed lighting, deep brown and cream-colored

walls and relaxed ambiance help to put patients at ease.

DCA uses top-of-the-line, low-radiation equipment to get the highest quality images for a more accurate diagnosis in a shorter time with as little radiation exposure as possible. The low-radiation equipment was particularly important to Shullman.

"I was cognizant when we built the center that we had to find equipment that had the lowest radiation possible," he said. "Our equipment is so low radiation that to have a child go and be scanned at an older imaging center that may have equipment that's very high radiation — the public should be out there asking the question, 'Is this safe for my child?' It's much easier to go out and buy everyday equipment. It's much less money and doesn't require as much maintenance, but we went out there and got the lowest radiation."

Although doctors typically recommend an

imaging center to patients, Shullman said patients can opt to use any center. Each Diagnostic Centers of America location has specialized high-quality equipment, which means patients have options in their diagnostic care.

"If you needed a cat scan of your heart, while we have a phenomenal piece of equipment here — our 64-slice CT — down in our Delray facility, that CT unit is so fast, it's two 64-slice units joined together, that it can literally take a picture as though the heart is not beating," Shullman said, noting that the advantage to the machine is that the patient does not have to have their heart slowed down to capture an image, which limits the effects on the patient.

At the Boynton Beach location, DCA offers a Molecular PET/CT that sets it apart.

"There is just not another unit like it," Shullman said. "You would have to go up





DCA Wellington staff members (L-R) Michelle Sanchez, Terri Balek, Steve Shullman, Elisa Stirling, Michael Wilmore, Tammy Anderson, Kat Delk, Missy Tinsley and Alan Shullman.

to New York or one of the teaching hospitals to get that level of equipment. We have our PET unit here, and that's fine for the majority of studies, but if you need a high-end PET/CT done, we're going to convince you to go down there and have it done. It's just a 15-minute drive."

The Wellington location offers a Siemens Verio 3 tesla MRI, which is stronger and also larger than most machines in the industry, meaning patients who are claustrophobic feel less closed-in, Shullman said.

A tesla is a measurement of magnetic strength, with most MRI units offering only 1.5 teslas. The resulting image is comparable to watching a movie on a standard television versus in high-definition, Shullman explained. It also offers the lowest radiation in the industry and has a wide field of view, which means fewer images and less exposure.

The high-quality images give radiologists

the ability to zoom in and retain the quality lost in lower-definition images.

"It gives us the ability to focalize and look into a specific area to see very intricate detail," Manager of Clinical Operations Mike Wilmore said. "Where typically the smaller you go into a part of the body, the more image resolution you lose with smaller magnets. Our magnet maintains its image resolution."

A second benefit to the advanced technology is the speed at which the images are taken. "We're able to acquire images of the body much faster than with a 1.5 tesla," Wilmore said. "The typical scan takes somewhere from 18 to 20 minutes. A scan on a 1.5 tesla takes from 35 to 40 minutes."

Once the images from the machines are taken, a radiologist from DCA partner Boca Radiology Group receives them within approximately 20 minutes, Shullman

said. The radiologist is able to use voice-recognition technology to transcribe their diagnosis and send it off to the referring physician even before the patient leaves the center.

The radiology group consists of highly specialized radiologists who often take fellowships and study for nine to 18 months longer to sub-specialize in an area. Because patient images are on a web-based database, a radiologist in Wellington could consult a partner in any location to discuss the case. Both can see the image in real time.

When it comes to diagnostic imaging, Diagnostic Centers of America offers a world-class facility with top patient care close to home.

Diagnostic Centers of America's Wellington facility is located at 2565 S. State Road 7. For more info., call (561) 727-2300 or visit www.dcamedical.com. ■