

Gulfshore Life

Top Doctors 2016: The Best In Their Field

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As part of our annual Top Doctors guide, we profile five of the professionals who are leading the way in their field. They're talented, respected and, overall, highlight the top-quality care in Southwest Florida.

Dr. Robert J. Zehr

Orthopaedic surgery at Zehr Center for Orthopaedics



With a record of about 400 joint replacements and 100 knee scopes per year, you wouldn't think Dr. Robert Zehr, 61, spends the majority of his day trying to help people solve their painful problems sans surgery.

The surgeon, who was CEO of Naples' Cleveland Clinic until founding the Zehr Center for Orthopaedics in 2007, performs more hip replacements than anyone in the Naples area, he says. He's particularly known for the less invasive, more accurate direct anterior approach, performed by very few surgeons in the area. But, generally, he says, going under the knife should be the last alternative to bring patients function and relief.

One nonsurgical solution he's practicing is a new biological injection of one of the body's naturally occurring proteins, which effectively halts the progression of the common osteoarthritis, or "wear and tear" arthritis.

"I'm the only one in the area between Tampa and Miami that's been given the privilege from (the manufacturer) to do that," he says.

But for those needing surgery, Zehr is still always looking for the best option of care. He recently co-founded Seaside Surgery Center, where he performs outpatient joint replacement—a concept found elsewhere in the country but nowhere else in Southwest Florida. Younger, insured and otherwise healthy patients can now receive hip, knee and shoulder replacements without the inherent risks of a hospital operation, and recover in their own homes starting the very same morning. Naples residents may skew older, he says, but

they also skew more active and vibrant.

"They demand excellence in their abilities to get around," Zehr says. "I think that because of my experience, I'm able to provide a great deal of understanding for what they need to do."