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## Room to Breathe

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# Room to Breathe

Led by Dr. Melissa Schwartz, the team at **Montgomery County ENT Institute** expands to serve an ever-growing roster of patients

by JENNY GRAHAM

photography by ALLURE WEST STUDIOS

**Sept. 1, 2016**, was a significant day in the nearly 10-year history of Montgomery County ENT Institute.

On this day, the practice merged with that of Sondra C. Saull, M.D., a step into the future that brought patients more comprehensive care than ever before. A board-certified member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery, Dr. Saull brings more than 30 years of experience to the combined practice. Montgomery County ENT Institute extended its reach even further with the recent opening of an additional facility in Huntingdon Valley.

This is good news to those who suffer from issues of the ears, nose and throat—issues that can truly take a toll on a patient's well-being.

Hearing loss, for example, can be devastating, but the audiologists of Montgomery County ENT Institute are extremely skilled at fitting and programming hearing aids, far more so than many other wholesale dealers that do not have hearing professionals on staff. The practice also offers highly accurate diagnostic testing for hearing loss which enables the physicians of Montgomery County ENT Institute to diagnose the condition and recommend hearing amplification or other treatments that may be necessary.

Sinus pressure, nasal congestion and allergies, as well as all the inconveniences that accompany them—sneezing, wheezing and coughing, even breathing struggles—can negatively affect one's quality of life. Montgomery County ENT Institute offers a number of options, both surgical and medical, including subcutaneous immunotherapy



(also known as allergy shots) and sublingual immunotherapy (drops or pills administered under the tongue). The latter is an excellent alternative for young children or those who are phobic of needles. Surgical management is tailored to each patient's unique anatomical problem and minimally invasive options are available.

When Tameeka Banks-Jenkins found herself debilitated by her own allergies, she turned to Melissa Neumann Schwartz, D.O., FAOCO, FAAOA, of Montgomery County ENT Institute. Today, five years later, Banks-Jenkins is glad she did.

"I was having problems with allergies, and having sinus problems as well," Banks-Jenkins says. "I would say I'm allergic to everything."

Banks-Jenkins had two myringotomy procedures done, in addition to a balloon sinuplasty and allergy injections, through Montgomery County ENT Institute. Thanks to her treatment, her allergies have thankfully gone from being a "10" to being successfully managed.

"They were great," she says of her experience with Montgomery County ENT Institute. "It was easy to schedule an appointment. ... The process was not long at all as well. I believe it took a week or so to schedule [the sinuplasty] with Holy Redeemer Hospital."

She adds: "The staff was great, and Dr. Schwartz was very informative. I just enjoyed the experience."

Dr. Schwartz, who has been in practice for approximately 20 years, is board certified by the American Osteopathic College of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery (AOCOO-HNS) in otolaryngology, as well as facial plastic surgery. Also, she is and has been a fellow of the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy and AOCOO-HNS for more than 10 years. Dr. Schwartz has extensive training that allows her to diagnose and treat symptoms in a manner that addresses the underlying cause(s) of an individual's sinus problems and allergies.





Dr. Sondra Saul



Dr. Michael Ondik



Dr. Melissa Schwartz

Dr. Schwartz's hospital affiliations speak to her high level of credentialing. For example, she is on staff at Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center, the Surgery Center of the Main Line and Albert Einstein Medical Center (Elkins Park division). She is also a clinical assistant professor at both Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and Drexel University School of Medicine, teaching students and residents about otolaryngology. Of the hospitals with which she's affiliated, Dr. Schwartz says, "They're quality facilities with well-run operating rooms."

Dr. Schwartz practices at Montgomery County ENT Institute with Michael P. Ondik, M.D., who is double board certified in otolaryngology-head and neck surgery and facial plastic and reconstructive surgery, respectively, by the American Board of Otolaryngology and the American Board of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery. With the practice since 2014, Dr. Ondik shares an equally impressive reputation among patients in the Greater Philadelphia Area, including Kathleen Smith (last name changed to protect privacy).

After an unsettling trip to the dermatologist revealed a diagnosis of skin cancer, Smith had no choice but to schedule a procedure to have the cancer removed from the bridge of her nose. Unfortunately, the procedure left her with "a hole" on her nose that she worried might mar her beauty.

Luckily, Smith was referred to Dr. Ondik, who saw her as an emergency patient the very next day. Dr. Ondik presented her with options for closing the area, not only to eliminate the risk of infection but also to help Smith regain a sense of normalcy as soon as possible.

"He was very calm, very reassuring," Smith says. "He made me feel like he was going to take really good care of me. I felt really calm and taken care of. My fears had really subsided."

After completing the procedure to close the wound on her nose, Smith says she had only a

wisp of a scar on her nose. While she could have easily covered the mark with makeup, Dr. Ondik offered a subsequent treatment to remove that light mark.

"Now, it looks like I never even had a hole in my nose," she says, adding that Dr. Ondik's work was the mark of an "artist."

Considering Dr. Ondik's impressive credentials, it is no wonder Smith had such a positive outcome. He is a member of the American Academy of Facial Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery and, like Dr. Schwartz, is on staff at Holy Redeemer Hospital and Medical Center and Albert Einstein Medical Center (Elkins Park division).

"It's very rare that you have a doctor that gives you the impression they are going to take such good care of you, and take the time to explain everything to you," Smith says. "It was a scary situation, but I just had such a good experience with him. ... To me, he's an artist, and he's very humble at the same time. He has a terrific bedside manner. He's very special. I hope I don't have to see him again, but if I do, I know that if he can close that hole in my nose, he can do anything."

With its experienced and caring staff, supported by the latest in technology, Montgomery County ENT Institute's growth should come as no surprise. ■



Montgomery County ENT Institute offers multiple options for treating allergies, which can negatively affect one's quality of life. Here, one of the doctors administers a skin test.

## **MONTGOMERY COUNTY ENT INSTITUTE**

**215-887-7380**

**[www.montcoent.com](http://www.montcoent.com)**

**Holy Redeemer Hospital  
Medical Office Building  
1650 Huntingdon Pike  
Meadowbrook, PA 19046**

**375 Township Line Road  
Elkins Park, PA 19027**