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Cape doctor opens heart care group

BY MICHELLE L. START
Florida Weekly Correspondent

A Cape Coral cardiologist is hoping to change the way residents on the west side of Lee County view health care.

"It is a bedroom community," said Dr. Louis Scala, a cardiologist who opened a practice in July. "Everybody is being shipped to Fort Myers. Lee Memorial

"It's not a call-up and we'll see you a month later type of group. We see patients right away."

(Health System) controls everything. Despite Cape Coral having 150,000 residents and Fort Myers having 66,000 residents, we only have one hospital here."

Fort Myers is home to Lee Memorial Hospital, HealthPark Medical Center, Southwest Florida Regional Medical Center and Gulf Coast Hospital.

"Our philosophy is to change the way everyone is thinking," Scala said. "There's no reason why Fort Myers residents couldn't come here."

He hopes to pull patients over the bridges by offering unlimited time with each patient and no wait times at his

office, which is called Cardiac Care Group.

While there are at least two practices that have offices in Cape Coral, Scala is the only one to headquarter his practice there.

"Most everything, if it's really serious, has to come over this way," said Ann Wilke, executive director of the Lee County Medical Society Alliance. "With all of that type of equipment, it is very expensive to have it duplicated."

Some 1,692 Lee County residents died of cardiovascular diseases last year, according to the health department. That's roughly a quarter of the 5,954 people who died in Lee County during 2006.

Scala said he has all of the medical equipment necessary for his specialty within his office and he also has medical privileges at Cape Coral Hospital.

"We want to encourage people to come here," he said. "Appointments can be immediate. It's not a call-up and we'll see you a month later type of group. We see patients right away. I'm focusing on Cape Coral. I'm trying to make a contribution without having the patient travel far."

Scala is double board certified. He has a degree in molecular biology, but also completed medical school.

Scala said he moved to Lee County because he has family in this area.

His office is located at 2721 Del Prado Boulevard, Suite 210.

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