

Despite the changes that life brings, a trusted physician

Nelia Chaves says Dr. Pani knows her well, 2017

For Nelia Chaves, having Dr. Pani as her primary care physician means that despite change—in where she lives and works, and in her health status—she has someone who knows her well. That is why, when she began a new job and had to select a new health plan, she had one key concern.

“What health insurance would allow me to stay with Dr. Pani?” she says. “I was willing to pay more for that plan.” She is also willing to travel. Since moving from Marlborough to Worcester, Ms. Chaves has continued seeing Dr. Pani in his Sudbury office.

Dr. Pani provides the entire package, she adds. “He’s not judgmental, which I appreciate. I’ve always been a light smoker, and he helped me quit by prescribing the patch. I started smoking again, but he doesn’t say ‘you have to quit.’ He says ‘Nelia, you *should* quit.’ Dr. Pani emphasizes staying healthy, including exercising, eating right and getting preventive screenings.”

“That’s an important part of my role—to make sure my patients receive the required screenings,” he notes. The last preventive screening he scheduled for Ms. Chaves was a mammogram, and it was followed by the kind of phone call he sometimes needs to make. “I told Nelia that the radiologist saw something on her mammogram, and we would like her to come back to repeat the test. I emphasized it might not be anything.”

But it proved to be breast cancer, and Ms. Chaves is grateful it was detected early. “I was dumbfounded when I heard the diagnosis, but I was assured that it was very treatable,” she recalls.

She was quickly scheduled for surgery at Emerson, which was performed by Elizaveta Ragulin Coyne, MD, a general surgeon. “The surgery went well, and the nursing care at Emerson was wonderful,” says Ms. Chaves.

Dr. Pani continues to keep a close eye on his devoted patient, who has a history of heart palpitations. “They began around the time my marriage broke up, and I was raising three small children,” Ms. Chaves recalls. “My stress level was high.”

When anxiety causes her palpitations to become worrisome, she checks in with Dr. Pani. “I will sometimes conduct an EKG in the office to rule out an abnormality,” he says. Ms. Chaves says she feels better after seeing him.

“Dr. Pani always encourages me. He knows me, he’s met my kids, and I trust him. I would recommend anyone who needs a primary care physician to go to Dr. Pani.”

