



**Michael H. Gold, M.D.**, is the founder and Medical Director of Gold Skin Care Center and Advanced Aesthetics Medi Spa in Nashville, TN. He is a board certified dermatologist who received his medical degree from the Chicago Medical School and completed his training in dermatology at Northwestern University. He is an assistant Clinical Professor at Vanderbilt University Medical Center in the Department of Dermatology.

High quality medical photography is a key component of patient care at the Gold Skin Care Center (GSCC) of Nashville, Tennessee. Seeing clear differences in before and after results drives continuous improvement and growth in patient services, and has established this practice as a leading center for laser and light-based aesthetic services in the region. The original three-person office in 1989—Dr. Gold, a nurse and a receptionist—has grown into a four divisions with 55 employees in a 20,000 square-foot facility.

Each division functions as an independent business unit, yet shares a dynamic synergy created through the cross-flow of patients, staff and shared resources. This is especially true with the photographic hardware and software systems, which provide photographic documentation for patient communication, treatment plans and outcome tracking.

Quality medical photography is mandatory at GSCC. Photographs are an integral part of the patient medical record. Proper photographic documentation—particularly for cosmetic procedures—means the case history is complete and is more than one person’s word versus another’s. Quality images improve patient care, and are the most comprehensive and inexpensive insurance available.

**The Laser & Rejuvenation Center:** The technological hub for the practice is The Laser & Rejuvenation Center. It contains the largest and most advanced collection of lasers and light sources in the Southeast. The VISIA® Complexion Analysis is used on one hundred percent of the patients - all are digitally imaged. Tracking even subtle changes, VISIA provides in-depth documentation capability. When administering photodynamic therapy (PDT), a patient can see the physical number of porphyrins, subsurface UV damage in the skin, red and brown areas, wrinkles, and more. RBX imaging capability within VISIA, enhances the visualization and analysis of vascular and melanin conditions.

How often is a patient photographed? It’s simple—every cosmetic procedure requires a picture on each patient visit. This practice has been incorporated in GSCC’s daily operations to more easily show people their actual improvement.

**Advanced Aesthetics Medi Spa:** In addition to a complete services menu designed for relaxation and renewal, Advanced Aesthetics Medi Spa is staffed with certified estheticians for consultations and care ranging from skin care to makeup, micropigmentation and eyelash extensions.

Medi spa clients seeking skin care improvement start with the imaging and analysis within the VISIA system. The medi spa estheticians also work cooperatively with laser center staff assuring each patient receives the best and most effective treatment programs. Working as a team, they set a good example of how the different divisions assist each other.

**Gold Skin Care Center:** Even with the growth of the entire practice over the years, a significant portion of Dr. Gold’s time remains devoted to general dermatology and dermatologic

surgery, where photography is equally as important. For instance, if Dr. Gold is treating a large skin cancer, it’s always imaged with a grading scale beneath the lesion, because documentation is essential. From the insurance company point of view, the photograph is part of the medical record. Unusual rashes are also photographed, as are other extraordinary cases. This aids with documentation, while



Photo: Heather Anne Thomas, Beall and Thomas Photography

*Gold Skin Care Center Staff.*

allowing the patients to see improvement throughout the visits. These visits can often span a year’s worth of work.

For biopsies, pathologists are provided with images in addition to tissue samples. As they put the pieces of puzzles together, including a photo is an important piece - one that pathologists greatly appreciate.

**Tennessee Clinical Research Center:** Initially formed to conduct dermatology and dermatologic surgery research, Tennessee Clinical Research Center (TCRC) is regarded as one of Tennessee’s leading clinical trial sites, with an existing database of more than 75,000 patients.

The Research Center has two rooms dedicated to research photography. This provides the consistent environment required to produce consistent photographs. These photography rooms also permit total body imaging.

Among its many clinical photography systems, TCRC has two OMNIA® Facial Imaging Systems. The OMNIA is great system for positioning the patient's head and then rotating the camera system 90° to either the left or right side to document change. OMNIA has the ability to overlay photos from session to session, making it one of the best devices on the market for picture consistency. It produces excellent patient images in a minimal amount of time.

**Imaging systems support:** With thousands of images generated among Gold Skin Care Center's four divisions, a master imaging database for maintenance and access is a necessity, and they have chosen to work with Canfield's Mirror® software. This software is interfaced with many of the campus computers but is user specific to assist in confidentiality.

GSCC has people in each department assigned to download and label pictures. It was a conscious decision to do so - with consistency comes reproducible and usable pictures. Fewer people handling the photos means they are able to maintain patient confidentiality. Photography becomes part of the medical records, and it is vital that reliable, dependable pictures be taken on each visit.

**The next evolution of medical photography:** As treatments continue toward more effective delivery systems and therapies, the hardware and capabilities for medical photography continue to evolve as well. Already, both in research and in mainstream medical photography, there is a new frontier of volume and form, of height, breadth and depth—medical photography and analysis in 3-D. This may be seen in the development of the VECTRA 3D system and associated software. This type of quantitative analysis will greatly impact the ability to make better patient assessments, and therefore better diagnoses.

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