

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Shine A Light: Dr. Sue Chandra

When a patient is referred to maternal fetal medicine, they are understandably anxious. It usually means the pregnancy has complications and is considered high risk. Sometimes that means the specialists in this field are disclosing difficult news about the pregnancy, especially when the fetal prognosis is guarded or life limiting.

Dr. Sue Chandra, maternal fetal medicine specialist, sees patients at the Lois Hole Hospital for Women in Edmonton. She's also an associate professor in the U of A department of obstetrics and gynecology. She was nominated for recognition by a physician she mentored, who feels Dr. Chandra's compassion toward her patients inspires others.

"Dr. Sue Chandra is an outstanding maternal fetal medicine specialist, and this is demonstrated on a daily basis when she sees the most complex obstetrical patients in Edmonton (+catchment area). Her patients often comment on how compassionate and informative she is, and this is especially important given most of these patients are sent to MFM due to their high-risk pregnancies. MFM are often the specialists who diagnose and have to disclose some of the most difficult news to their patients (for example, a diagnosis of a complex fetal condition or and sometimes lethal anomalies), but Dr Chandra always delivers the news with empathy and compassion. She is truly an inspiration to those around her and a role model to her trainees. One would only aspire to be like her one day and help train a new generation of physicians who are just as compassionate and passionate as her!"

And now, more about Dr. Chandra ...



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- Dr. Sue Chandra

Dr. Sue Chandra, Edmonton

How long have you been practicing medicine?

I've been practicing since 2002.

What is maternal fetal medicine?

Maternal fetal medicine is a sub-specialty of obstetrics and gynecology. We see patients who have a high-risk pregnancy due to a condition with the mother or the fetus, and we help diagnose conditions and manage those pregnancies in partnership with pediatric cardiology, neonatology, pathology, pediatric surgical and obstetrical medicine specialists.

We work extremely closely with our general obstetrics colleagues to provide care to these complex patients. Maternal fetal medicine is highly multidisciplinary, and I often feel we function as the switchboard operator for high-risk pregnancies, connecting the various team members providing care for these patients. I am privileged to work with an amazing team at the MFM clinic at the Lois Hole Hospital for Women.

Why did you choose to focus your practice on maternal fetal medicine?

I chose this specialty because I'm drawn to the complex and diverse nature of maternal and fetal conditions. I am passionate about fetal imaging, and there is a lot of problem solving and detective work to come up with a diagnosis amidst clinical uncertainty.

There is such a broad range of reasons patients are referred to MFM, such as a multiple pregnancy, a mother with hypertension, or a fetus with a serious health concern. Every day and every patient is a little different.

What do you find most satisfying about your work?

One would think that it may be sad and difficult to work in a field where we know we're managing complex situations, but this specialty can also bring a lot of joy. For example, I often deliver good news that the fetus is thriving. Some complicated fetal conditions can be managed with in-utero therapies that substantially impact their prognosis in a positive way. Through advances in fetal surgery and in-utero gene therapy, there are many things we can do these days to facilitate a healthy pregnancy.

As a member of the OB/GYN department at the U of A, I also enjoy teaching and mentoring medical students and residents, ultrasound trainees and sonographers. Through that work, I hope to grow the next generation of compassionate maternal fetal medicine specialists.

About the Shine a Light program

The Shine a Light program recognizes and profiles AMA member physicians who are making a difference by:

- Spearheading projects that improve patient and/or community life
- Diligently following/tracking patients to ensure coordinated care
- Contributing to Alberta's vision of a high-performing health care system