

Alberta Doctors' Digest

Shine A Light: Dr. Mzikayise Tshatshela

New physician to Chestermere, Alberta, is patient's "Shining Star"

Dr. Mzikayise Tshatshela admits that he's sacrificed a bit of excitement and diversity in his practice of medicine since coming to Canada from South Africa in 2012. But the benefits of the Canadian public health care system – particularly in terms of patient access – outweigh the unpredictable, under-resourced system in South Africa.

During his three and a half years as a physician in South Africa, Dr. Tshatshela says that he "worked exclusively in public hospitals and clinics. So I saw and treated many more infectious diseases ... and lots of trauma. Medicine there was very hands-on," he continues. "GPs do minor surgeries, appendectomies ... many procedures that GPs here have to be supervised for. We worked closely with specialists in South Africa out of necessity."

Just over a year ago, Dr. Tshatshela brought his invaluable South Africa experience, along with experience from six years practicing in Saskatchewan, to his position as a family physician at Chestermere's [LakeMed Clinic](#).

No doubt his exposure to, and treatment of, such a range of illnesses and injuries plays a role in Dr. Tshatshela's treatment of patients, one of whom credits his keen sense of observation and commitment to her care with ultimately tying a very subtle symptom to an accurate diagnosis and timely treatment.

"He's my shining star," Dr. Tshatshela's patient commented in her nomination of him for the AMA's [Shine A Light](#) program. "His compassion and ongoing support are beyond what any other doctor has demonstrated."



"I love the science of medicine and the privilege it affords me to serve people from all walks of life."

Dr. Mzikayise Tshatshela, Chestermere

At home with the Medical Home model

With its motto – Here to Stay – and its use of the [Medical Home](#) as a team-based health care delivery model, LakeMed Clinic was a natural fit for Dr. Tshatshela and his well-rounded, professional background.

Continuity of care is a priority at LakeMed Clinic; as much as possible, its patients are provided with efficient and timely in-clinic referrals, based on the clinic's "wide scope of practice ... and easy access to specialists," explains Dr. Tshatshela.

"Our vision is to make LakeMed Clinic a community health centre," he says. "We want our patients, who are our neighbors [the majority of the clinic's physicians and staff live in the community] to have things done locally as much as possible."

"We're very proud of our Medical Home model," Dr. Tshatshela adds. "The group of us physicians and staff, with our different strengths and interests, provide our clinic patients with thorough and comprehensive care."

Dr. Tshatshela's varied family-medicine-based background is evident in his areas of passion in medicine, which include chronic disease management, emergency medicine and mental health.

On CDM: "Helping patients maximize the quality of their life and understand the importance of managing their condition ... it adds years to their life."

On emergency medicine: "I love it. That comes from my background; the training to manage acute conditions is a key part of my skills."

On mental health: "Mental illnesses are among the leading causes of disability in the world. People are becoming more aware of their mental health, which is good. You can change the trajectory of your life by taking care of your mental health."

Introducing ... Dr. Mzikayise Tshatshela

Years in practice

10 years

Why medicine?

I love the science of medicine and the privilege it affords me to serve people from all walks of life. Moreover, I enjoy the endless mental stimulation I get from my day-to-day work. It is a career that challenges me to learn continuously.

Mantra/philosophy of life

"It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again ... who at the best knows in

the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

– *Theodore Roosevelt*