



## Horizon NJ Health Physician Spotlight:

### Kevin T. Nini, MD FACS

For **Dr. Kevin T. Nini**, surgery is part of the continuum of care. “I am fortunate for the opportunity to work with my patients over a lifetime,” he said. “Generally, surgeons become aware of a health problem and they take care of that problem in surgery, usually with a single encounter. After a follow up or two, they move ahead to their next surgery and patient. I am lucky to follow the same patients through their lives and I see them improve.”

Dr. Kevin Nini is a **craniofacial surgeon** who treats congenital abnormalities: cranio-facial anomalies and congenital clefting of the lips or palate. He is also a plastic surgeon, specializing in cosmetic surgery of the face, breast and body. In his specialty of craniofacial surgery, Dr. Nini deals with congenital and acquired deformities of the skull, face and jaws. He typically treats conditions, such as craniosynostosis (isolated and syndromic), rare craniofacial clefts, acute and chronic sequellae of facial fractures, cleft lip and palate, micrognathia, Treacher Collins Syndrome, Apert’s Syndrome, Crouzon Syndrome, hemifacial microsomia and more.

In private practice since 1992, Dr. Nini’s main office is in New Brunswick, NJ. He is a member of a multidisciplinary team and Vice Chairman of the Surgery Department at the **Craniofacial-Neurosurgical Center** in the Children’s Hospital at Saint Peter’s University Hospital, New Brunswick, NJ. At St. Peter’s, Dr. Nini works with two neurosurgeon colleagues: **Dr. Arno Fried, FACS**, and **Dr. Mostafa Elkhashab**.

“We have a very good program at Saint Peter’s,” Dr. Nini said. “Our Craniofacial-Neurosurgical Center offers a comprehensive approach for treating craniofacial abnormalities, such as cleft lip and cleft palate. The team can handle all types of concerns, from feeding to speech patterns and assisting patients to adjust after surgery.” The center’s specialists and experts include a maxillofacial prosthodontist who makes artificial jaws, an ophthalmologist, an orthodontist, an oral/maxillofacial (upper jaw) surgeon, a pediatric dentist, pediatric neurosurgeon, a registered nurse and a speech-language pathologist.

“If a child is born with a suspicious abnormality, the pediatrician reviews a variety of possible concerns,” he said. “Saint Peter’s has outreach programs and resources available for the parent or guardian who needs to learn about the condition or to have their child referred.”

When asked what he would like providers to know about his specialty, Dr. Nini emphasized the importance of

“**early recognition and early referral.**” He explained, “Ideally, a child will be referred early on. Usually, the diagnosis for a child with craniofacial issues is made at birth, but if the child’s head is still misshapen by the age of three months, an evaluation should be made. For the best timing and for optimum results, patients need to be referred as soon as possible, certainly from three to six months of age for the surgery.”

“Left untreated, the conditions and abnormalities have an immediate and, possibly, devastating impact on the health of these patients,” he noted. He and the team need to see and treat patients before conditions advance to a stage that is difficult for the patient to handle and for the surgeon to correct.

Dr. Nini explained, “A cleft palate and its related problems can be quite complex. The patient’s previous (pre-surgical) condition may have limited the child in eating or speaking normally. As patients develop, problems can arise. Not all are surgical in nature. Surgery can repair or eliminate the problem, but the anatomical problem is not all the patient has to handle. Throughout this process, the child or young adult must learn to develop normal speech, how to eat and reach other stages of expected development.”

Dr. Nini’s background includes medical school at the **University of Medicine & Dentistry of NJ**, Piscataway, residency at the **University of Florida College of Medicine**, general surgery residency at the **University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine** in Philadelphia and an advanced Fellowship in craniofacial surgery at **University of Miami Hospital & Clinics**, Miami, Florida.

He is board certified by the **American Board of Plastic Surgery** and the **American Board of Surgery**. Dr. Nini is a Fellow of the **American College of Surgeons** and a member of the **American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery**. He is a published author and lecturer and was selected one of the top plastic surgeons by the *New Jersey/New York Castle Connolly Medical Guide*. According to *New Jersey Monthly* and *Family Circle* Magazines, he is known as one of the region’s foremost experts in plastic surgery.

The obvious differences he and the team make in physically transforming their patients’ lives have an impact and improve patients’ emotional and social development. After speaking with Dr. Nini, the enthusiasm he has for his specialty is obvious. He seems to gain great rewards, as he follows the progress his patients make and, no doubt, will continue to make.

**Thanks to Dr. Nini and the team, these patients will have an opportunity for improved outcomes and a more normal life.**