

HOUR PROFESSIONALS

North Oakland Plastic Surgery

Richard Hainer, M.D., F.A.C.S.



Surgery (general surgery). He also holds a certificate of added qualification (CAQ) in hand surgery. Dr. Hainer has privileges at several hospitals and at the Unasource Surgery Center.

“While there are 24 recognized specialties, there are literally 150 so-called self-designated boards,” Dr. Hainer says, referring to “boards” that aren’t recognized by the ABMS and may have few, if any, requirements.

“You might walk into a physician’s office and see 10 diplomas on the wall from self-designated boards that look pretty impressive, but they’re completely meaningless,” he says. “We live in a society of generic equivalents, but there’s no generic equivalent to a board-certified plastic surgeon.”

Some physicians perform cosmetic surgery in their office setting or operating suite because they lack the training and certification to obtain hospital privileges. Dr. Hainer says it would be a step forward in ensuring patient safety to require the same level of accreditation for office-based surgery as for hospital-based surgery. He and his colleagues often see patients who have had poor outcomes from procedures performed by “generic” practitioners.

“Just because someone takes a weekend course in breast augmentation doesn’t mean

While the number of cosmetic procedures has dramatically increased over the last decade, the field of plastic surgery has its roots in reconstruction.

“We’re trained as plastic surgeons to restore form and function,” says Dr. Richard Hainer, of North Oakland Plastic Surgery. “Everything we’ve learned about improving the aesthetics — meaning how to do face-lifts, breast augmentations, and tummy tucks — is a direct extension of what we’ve learned fundamentally as reconstructive surgeons.

“I enjoy doing cosmetic surgery, and I really enjoy doing reconstructive procedures because that’s not only what I was trained in, it’s our foundation.”

Dr. Hainer points out that concepts of plastic surgery date back to ancient India. The professional field evolved after WWII, when soldiers returned home with horrific war wounds — especially facial injuries. When the American Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgeons (ASPRS) dropped the “R” from its name, there was much debate among its membership.

“A number of plastic surgeons who do nothing but reconstructions believe they’re being overlooked,” Dr. Hainer says. “When lay people think of plastic surgery, they automatically think ‘Dr. 90210,’ but that’s not what we’re all about. I tell my patients not to watch that show because it’s like a sitcom. It’s more fiction than fact.”

Although some may consider aesthetic plastic surgery

a “nonessential” luxury, it does play a practical role, especially in today’s troubled economy as people are trying to get back into the workplace, changing careers, and competing with younger workers.

“Patients are coming in, [but] not because they’re vain,” Dr. Hainer says. “They want to restore their body image and, ultimately, that will restore their self-image and self-confidence, and give them a little competitive edge. It’s amazing how some very simple procedures can improve their quality of life.”

Having aesthetic plastic surgery is an investment in yourself, says Dr. Hainer. But, as with any investment, you need to do your homework. Choosing a physician based on bargain-basement prices or a catchy advertising campaign can lead to less than exemplary results.

“There’s absolutely no reason to choose anyone other than a surgeon who is board-certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery,” Dr. Hainer advises.

The American Board of Plastic Surgery (ABPS) is one of 24 medical boards recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS), the “gold standard” in physician certification. Physicians certified by the ABPS meet rigorous requirements. They keep up-to-date through continuing medical education courses, and they undergo a re-certification process every 10 years.

Dr. Hainer is board-certified by the American Board of Plastic Surgery and the American Board of

they are qualified to do it or know how to deal with any or all possible complications,” Dr. Hainer says. “The patient’s doctor may not even be a surgeon.”

Dr. Hainer informs patients of their options and educates them about the procedures and any risks involved. He addresses their concerns and works with them to develop appropriate solutions. Dr. Hainer encourages prospective patients to consult with other board-certified physicians to obtain a few different opinions.

“I’m not competing against my true colleagues, because I know they’re trained,” Dr. Hainer says. “I just want to make sure that, if you do have an aesthetic procedure, it’s done safely by someone who is trained and qualified to provide that service.”

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