

Board Certification makes for a flawless experience at North Oakland Plastic Surgery

by Stephanie Birch

In the vast field of cosmetic plastic surgery, looks – and words – can be deceiving.

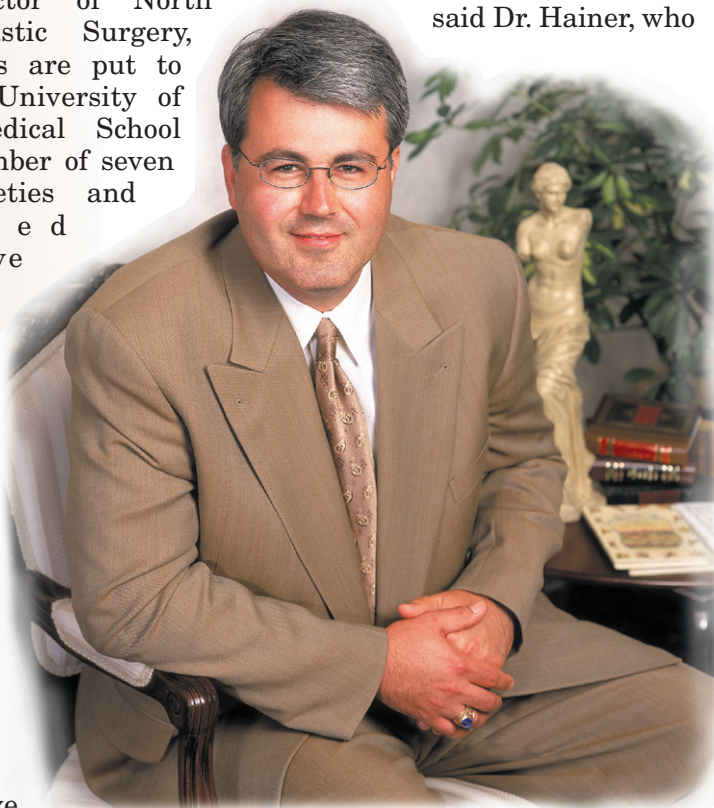
Claims such as “receive a one-hour facelift,” and “the clinic with the quickest liposuction machine in the state,” often lead customers through both a confusing and falsified maze. So when customers step into the professional office of Dr. Richard Hainer, director of North Oakland Plastic Surgery, their concerns are put to rest by the University of Michigan Medical School graduate, member of seven medical societies and certified reconstructive surgeon.

“Because cosmetic surgery is not governed by the insurance companies, it’s kind of the last ‘golden egg’ of the medical profession, and a lot of people are claiming to be board-certified by make-believe boards,” said Dr. Hainer. “It gets so confusing that it’s sometimes even hard for my fellow physicians and I to tell which boards are real and which are not: That’s really the enemy we’re battling. We at the American Society of Plastic Surgeons are trying to promote educating the public more about what board-certification really means.”

Although determining whether a plastic surgeon is credible or not can be difficult, Dr. Hainer recommends performing some research.

“The rules are very lax, so an ear, nose and throat specialist

could claim to be board-certified and offer cosmetic surgery in his office and no one could stop him,” he said. “But you want to make sure your plastic surgeon can also perform his procedures at a hospital, because if a hospital is going to assume some of the risk of a doctor’s surgery, it is going to make sure he has the knowledge to perform the procedures correctly,” said Dr. Hainer, who



is affiliated with Crittenton Hospital in Rochester, St. Joseph Mercy Oakland in Pontiac, William Beaumont Hospital in both Troy and Royal Oak and the Unasource Surgery Center in Troy.

After receiving an initial degree at the University of Michigan Medical School, Dr. Hainer held a residency at Henry Ford Hospital in General Surgery and at the University of Michigan Medical Center in General Surgery. He also held fellowships at both the Cleveland Clinic Foundation in Hand Surgery and the Oregon Health Sciences University in Plastic Surgery.

Although originally intending to practice reconstructive hand surgery – a request he still honors by customers – Dr. Hainer says he decided plastic surgery was the correct specialty for him after “dabbling in it” in medical school.

“As part of the program, you get to train in different surgeries, and that led me to plastic surgery,” he said. “There’s a huge diversity in plastic surgery, and I really like the variety. I treat everyone from kids to adults, from burn victims to cranio-facial reconstructive patients.”

After training in surgery for 10 years prior to opening his practice seven years ago, Dr. Hainer offers an extensive array of surgeries. Potential patients can choose from the categories of breast, body, face and skin care surgeries, with specifics included under each category. The body category, for example, includes such surgeries as a tummy tuck (abdominoplasty), liposuction, gynecomastia, calf augmentation and buttock augmentation.

Although two patients may choose the same type of surgery, Dr. Hainer explains that the procedure is slightly different for everyone.

“This is not a cookie-cutter surgery, and we [at North Oakland Plastic Surgery] are here to individualize your care,” he said. “The procedure depends on what you want to accomplish.”

Prior to any surgery, Dr. Hainer recommends that patients become educated about risks and possible complications, as well as the specifics of the procedure. Anyone curious about receiving plastic surgery is given a free educational

consultation at North Oakland, for which Dr. Hainer presents the potential patient with brochures, information packets and practical advice.

“I always enforce that this is real surgery,” he says, “and they need to take it as seriously. Smoking [for example] complicates healing in 20 percent of patients. I don’t want the complications that smoking causes, and I know they don’t, so I look them straight in the eye and ask if they’re willing to stop smoking for six weeks prior to and after the surgery. If not, then they don’t want [the surgery] badly enough.”

Although brochures and information concerning new pieces of technology arrive to Dr. Hainer’s offices consistently, he says he never jumps into the waters feet-first. If the product’s seller can provide an equitable and sufficient amount of clinical data, as well as information on the product’s success over a couple of years, he will look into the technology more seriously.

“I’m not going to offer something to my patients if I can’t look them in the eye and tell them I believe in it,” he said. “Medicine is about continuing education, and you have to be willing to bring in new technology but be cautious, too. Some doctors that have been practicing the same procedures since 1960 may be practicing an outdated method that has since been improved, so you have to find a balance.”

To aid curious potential patients, Dr. Hainer answers questions on a blog accessed through North Oakland Plastic Surgery’s Web site, <http://www.drhainer.com>