

CARING IS OUR CULTURE

Imperium Chiropractic Expands Again, Choosing Superior for Its Newest Clinic

The Latin word “imperium” means absolute or supreme power. And for Dr. Tom Tozer, chiropractor and co-owner of Imperium Chiropractic, the name he gave his company speaks volumes about his profession.

“I wanted something unique and identifiable,” he explained, “and the meaning of the word imperium makes me think of the power of the body to heal itself – and the power of chiropractic care to assist the body in healing itself.”

Factor in the practice’s tagline, “Caring is our Culture,” and there’s no doubt about this clinic’s goals.

Imperium has been in business in Ladysmith, Wisconsin, since 1996. A second location in Eau Claire, Wisconsin, was added in 2016. And in July of this year, a third location was established right here in Superior.

HISTORY

Clinic Director Robyn Tozer is also Imperium’s co-owner. She and Dr. Tozer, a

married couple, have worked hard to establish and grow their practice.

“When we opened the Ladysmith location in 1996, we were initially part of Allied Health Chiropractic, the largest doctor-owned chiropractic group in Wisconsin,” she explained. “The group ultimately dissolved, and we have been Imperium since 2014.”

Dr. Tozer, who is originally from Bloomer, Wisconsin, earned his undergraduate degree in chemistry from Bemidji State University. He later earned his doctorate in chiropractic from the former Northwestern Chiropractic College (now called Northwestern Health Sciences University) in Bloomington, Minnesota. He also maintains a Chiropractic Certification in Spinal Trauma through the International Chiropractors Association.

Robyn Tozer has a background in health care management, and Dr. Tozer expressed gratitude for his wife’s partnership. “She is truly gifted in the business side of things. She handles our IT, HR, accounting, trains new employees and has her eyes



to the future,” he said. “She handles all the things that would take me away from patient care. I couldn’t do this without her.”

TEAM IMPERIUM

In total, Imperium employs eight people, including four doctors. Dr. Tozer works primarily in Ladysmith and also travels to Eau Claire once a week.

Dr. Tonya Prokop-Nette is also based in Ladysmith, while Dr. Krysty Damrow works in Eau Claire. And the newest doctor – Dr. William Zimmer – operates the Superior clinic. Interestingly, all four earned their doctorates from Northwestern Health Sciences University.



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– DR. TOM TOZER

Additionally, Imperium has support staff members who answer phones, schedule appointments and handle in-house insurance billing for all three locations. These individuals are also cross-trained as chiropractic assistants.

APPROACH TO PATIENT CARE

Imperium Chiropractic’s primary objective is to help patients feel better. “The majority of our patients come to us in pain,” Robyn Tozer said. “Our goal is to get them out of pain as quickly as possible.”

To achieve this, the doctors take plenty of time to get to know their patients, so they have a comprehensive understanding of why they seek treatment. “First,” Dr. Tozer explained, “Our staff sit knee-to-knee with the patient, asking lots of questions: why they’re coming in, their pain’s location and intensity, family health history, social habits, goals for treatment and a review of bodily systems, like the heart and gastrointestinal systems.”

Following the in-depth assessment, the doctor and patient review this information. Then X-rays are usually taken right on-site at Imperium. The doctor and patient review what was found and discuss the recommended treatment protocol. A chiropractic adjustment is typically completed during the first visit.

“Visits one and two are about creating a baseline and figuring out where we want to go,” Dr. Tozer said. He noted that while

some conditions can be treated in as few as four sessions, others require a lifetime of care due to their chronic nature and/or severity.

CONDITIONS TREATED

The doctors at Imperium treat a lengthy list of maladies, including:

- headaches
- vertigo
- jaw pain
- ear infections
- shoulder issues, including rotator cuff problems
- tennis elbow
- carpal tunnel syndrome
- neck pain: muscle tension, whiplash, “tech neck” (caused by constantly looking downward at handheld devices), degenerative disc disease, osteoarthritis, sprains/strains, and infant torticollis (when babies have trouble turning their heads, or have tilted heads due to their position in the womb or after a difficult childbirth)
- back pain: muscle tension, issues caused by poor posture and/or carrying heavy backpacks, osteoarthritis, sports injuries, scoliosis (a sideways curve in the backbone) and degenerative disc disease
- sciatica
- sports-related injuries for any bodily joint, including ankles, shoulders and knees
- general wellness

The most common conditions Dr. Tozer sees include low back pain, neck pain and headaches, he said in explaining a bit about how chiropractors treat such a wide range of conditions.

“What we really focus on is the neuromusculoskeletal system,” he said. “That’s our specialty – the function of the body. We look at all the different joints of the body and evaluate proper alignment and function,



along with the muscles of that area. We also trace back to what part of the nervous system is involved.”

The doctors at Imperium are trained to treat patients of all ages. “My youngest patient was five days old and my oldest was 105½,” Dr. Tozer noted.

Most of Imperium’s patients are referred to them by other patients. They also work hard to create strong relationships with other health-care providers.

TREATMENT MODALITIES

While a chiropractic adjustment (the manipulation of a joint or vertebra) is the most well-known type of treatment, modern chiropractic care offers far more. For instance, Imperium Chiropractic doctors provide soft tissue work known as myofascial release. Trigger point therapy is another option. Therapeutic ultrasound and electric muscle stimulation are also available.

Patient education is also a large and important part of what they do. “We teach stretching exercises that the patient can do at home,” Dr. Tozer said. “We offer nutrition education along with low-cost, low-tech things they can do at home using foam rollers, rubber tubing and tennis balls. We also teach them about the right pillows to use for their sleeping position.”

Imperium also has products available for purchase, including pharmaceutical-grade vitamins and supplements, cervical pillows, custom orthotics and low back braces.

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"MY DREAM WAS TO WORK FOR DR. TOZER AND TO MOVE BACK TO SUPERIOR, SO THIS IS LITERALLY MY DREAM COME TRUE."

– DR. WILLIAM ZIMMER

Imperium Chiropractic accepts all major insurance, Medicare/Medicaid, a cash plan for the uninsured and payment plans for those with difficulty paying. It also has a special program to help veterans. Eligible vets are treated through the VA Community Care Program at no cost to the veteran. "I think it's our responsibility to take care of the people who have taken care of us," Robyn Tozer said.

UWS GRAD DR. WILLIAM ZIMMER – NOW AT THE SUPERIOR CLINIC

Dr. William Zimmer is now accepting patients at Imperium Chiropractic's brand-new Superior location in Suite 111 of the Central Flats apartment complex at 1001 Belknap St., which also provides prime ground-level space for businesses. At 26 years old, he possesses youth and energy in spades and is also a highly educated and well trained chiropractor. In fact, he has

known Dr. Tozer since he was child who needed treatment.

"I'm originally from Ladysmith and attended college at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, where I earned my undergraduate degree in chemistry and biology," Zimmer explained. "But when I was 8 years old, I was in a fender-bender accident with my parents, and I began seeing Dr. Tozer once a month for regular maintenance.

"In high school, I had to do a professional job shadow, and I chose to work with Dr. Tozer," he added. "I fell in love with the profession and knew it was my calling." He noted that Dr. Tozer has continued serving as his mentor ever since.

Zimmer also enjoyed living in Superior while in college and knew he wanted to return. "I love the area – I love Lake Superior and the small-town community feel," he said. "I'm deeply honored that the Tozers decided on me to be the face of Imperium in Superior at the new location. My dream was to work for Dr. Tozer and to move back to Superior, so this is literally my dream come true."

"I've known Dr. Zimmer for a very long time," Dr. Tozer said. "He's been a great student – but is a definite leader, too. He is very grounded and compassionate." Zimmer has also been working with Robyn Tozer regarding the business side of operating a clinic.



Zimmer is the only Superior-based employee, relying on Imperium's support staff for assistance. The practice may add additional employees later as needed.

Zimmer noted that treatment protocols at the Superior location are almost identical to those provided at Imperium's other clinics, but there is one other area of interest he'd like to explore. "I want to emphasize mental health and look closely at that as a factor in recovery," he said. "I'm interested in learning more about how one's mental outlook can affect healing, recovery and pain levels."

GROWING SUPERIOR ROOTS

Zimmer noted that both President and CEO Taylor Pedersen of the Superior-Douglas County Area Chamber of Commerce and Executive Director Jim Caesar of The Development Association have been helpful and



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welcoming. “They helped me make connections with others,” he said. And to expand his network of business colleagues, Zimmer joined the Chamber Ambassadors – the Chamber’s “goodwill arm.” Ambassadors enthusiastically attend ribbon cutting events, register attendees at Business After Five events and the Chamber Play Day Annual Golf Outing and participate in many other activities.

The Tozers are excited about expanding into Superior, too. “Superior is a nice-sized city with a lot to offer,” said Dr. Tozer. “There is a lot of great energy and we’ve gotten a really warm welcome. And Central Flats has great exposure, is in a beautiful building and has great proximity to housing and the college. I’m very optimistic about the area.”


Robyn Tozer also noted that P&R Properties (the developers of the Central Flats campus along with many other housing complexes in Superior and Duluth), along with The Chamber and the City of Superior, have also been supportive throughout the process. Citing the support of Taylor Pedersen and Director of Marketing and Social Media Nikky Farmakes of the Chamber, she said, “They all have great strategies in place for business expansion and development.”

A REWARDING PROFESSION

“The most rewarding thing for me is being able to see people – in all states of being – wanting to improve their health,” Dr. Tozer said. Watching new doctors grow and succeed is also very gratifying to him.

“I’m proud of mentoring young doctors to be successful,” he said, “so they can help even more people along the way.”

And patients are clearly grateful for the excellent care they receive. Imperium Chiropractic has been voted “Best Chiropractic Care in Chippewa Valley” for the last three years through Volume One, an Eau Claire-based publication. “I read every review we receive,” Robyn Tozer said. “After all these years, I still get teary-eyed when I read about patients feeling better.”

The Superior clinic is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 6:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday from 7 to 11 a.m. 

Andrea Busche is a Twin Ports-based freelance writer.



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