

By Janet McCormick

TRAINING STATIONS

Hands-On

Instructors are well versed in all indications and contraindications for each service, and in the management of adverse events.

Finding training for medical aesthetics staff that is not product-related and that centers on skills and reliable medical information is difficult. In this column we'll review the various medical training centers around the country to keep you up-to-date on educational opportunities available to you and your staff. We'll check out every level and present the best of what we find in this column. If you've been impressed with a particular training group, please write to me about it in care of llewis@creativeage.com.

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The Esthetic Skin Institute, a highly accredited resource for medical aesthetics training and certification for medical professionals, owes its success to its founder's unique combination of skills and experience.

Working as a registered nurse in Florida

in the 1990s, Sasha Parker discovered that she also had a keen interest in skin care and holistic health. "I had a friend who was working as an esthetician," she explains, "and she was so happy working with healthy, appreciative clients. She was also doing very well."

So Parker obtained licenses both as an esthetician and as an electrologist, and started to establish a skincare practice. Soon she was working in both fields with a goal of eventually phasing out of nursing and working full time as a skincare specialist.

Her plans changed, however, after an encounter with a physician at the facility where she worked. Observing his high degree of stress and fatigue, she suggested that he consider incorporating skin care into his practice, explaining the advantages and benefits of doing so. At the time, the concept of aesthetic medicine was so new that the MD was uncertain and declined. Later, after attending one of her educational presentations, he invited her to meet with him and his partner. Convinced of the



▲ Esthetic Skin Institute provides courses for doctors, nurses and physician assistants.

Photo: courtesy of Esthetic Skin Institute

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potential for enhancing his practice with aesthetics, he invited her to join them.

That was the beginning of the Esthetics Skin Institute. As time passed and the medical aesthetics field developed, more and more doctors and nurses contracted with Parker for training. Because she was a gifted and passionate educator, training soon eclipsed all of her other activities and in 1997 she established the institute.

Today, Parker provides courses for doctors, registered nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, dentists and dental surgeons as well as select courses for licensed practical nurses and licensed vocational nurses. No matter what the subject, her primary goal is training practitioners to provide safe, high quality care. "It's amazing how many of us feel that just because we have a license to provide medical care, we are knowl-

edgeable enough to provide aesthetics care," she says. But this isn't always the case. "In my state," Parker reports, "from 1997 to 2003, 244 cases of adverse events were reported from laser treatments. Out of those 244 events, 202 treatments were administered by physicians." She believes it's imperative, therefore, for every individual in the medical aesthetics profession—from physicians to nurses to physician assistants—to obtain in-depth, hands-on training. "The key to good delivery of care," says Parker, "is good education."

Her high standards for Esthetic Skin Institute courses receive continuous praise from her students, and her return and referral rates are high. "My students return for training in all of the aesthetics services they plan to offer in their practices," she notes. "They also refer colleagues who wish to transition into aesthetics or add aesthetic services to their practices."

FACULTY

Sasha Parker, RN, LMT, FS, CE, is president and founder of the Esthetic Skin Institute. She initially studied business at Indiana University before refocusing her career and receiving her Associate of Science in Nursing from Broward Community College in Florida. During her 23-year nursing career, she served as an assistant surgical administrator of an outpatient surgery center and as surgical administrator of an eye care and surgery center, working with many well-known plastic surgeons in South Florida. For eight years, Parker has also been licensed as an esthetician, certified electrologist and massage therapist. She is a pioneer of hands-on workshops for medical aesthetics procedures, personally training thousands of medical



professionals and estheticians in the United States, Europe and Puerto Rico. The Esthetic Skin Institute is an approved trainer of dermal fillers for Inamed Aesthetics and Medicis Corp., and is recognized by Allergan. Parker is a regular guest speaker at the University of California Irvine's spa management program, the American Academy of Aesthetic Medicine and the National Nurses Business Association. She is also president of the Association of Medical Esthetic Nurses (AMEN), was named Florida's 2004 Business Woman of the Year, has written a number of medical aesthetics manuals and serves as a consultant to numerous medical aesthetics practices in the U.S. and abroad.

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Another indication of the quality of her service is the caliber of physicians who comprise her board of advisers. “Such highly respected physicians do not become affiliated with an organization that is not high quality,” she observes.

Parker has been referred to as “a visionary and a pioneer ahead of her time” for developing this training system. Her response? “I have always been a seeker and giver of knowledge,” she notes, “and I have had some great teachers along the way who helped me, so now I strive to help others.”

Courses

Parker has drawn from her own depth of experience and understanding of the field to create the courses offered by ESI. One key focus is on the process of transi-

tioning from working with ill patients to a wellness model. “We provide a complete knowledge set for the physician and other medical practitioners,” she explains, “taking them from the practice of pathologies or surgeries to the practice of wellness. This field offers them the opportunity to change focus completely or add a new dimension to an existing practice.” One of her greatest rewards, she notes, is observing her students’ renewed excitement for practicing medicine after completing one of her courses.

ESI courses are time-effective for busy professionals — either one or two days in duration. Current courses include:

- The Art and Science of Botox
- Dermal Fillers
- Advanced Botox and Dermal Fillers
- Laser Training Consortium (covering IPL, lasers and energy-based machines)
- Chemical Peeling and Microdermabrasion — A Skin Rejuvenation Class
- Mesotherapy-Lipotherapy
- Sclerotherapy Solutions
- Setting Up Your Esthetics Practice from A to Z



Each course includes intense individual instruction with appropriate application experience. Attendees receive a course manual, marketing tools, necessary supporting forms and electronic files of relevant templates, such as client history, consent and policy/procedure documents. When attendees complete the course, they are certified as ready to perform the core skills covered and to apply the information successfully in an aesthetics practice. They are well versed in all indications and contraindications for each service, and in the management of adverse events.

Each student performs every step of the treatment, from consult and charting to a hands-on session working with classmates or volunteer patients. "When students leave the class," says Parker, "they know what they are doing."

The courses are taught by Parker and other recognized experts. All courses are non-product related, with no mention of specific equipment or products. No sales presentations are allowed in any class sponsored or held by ESI.

(Consult the Esthetic Skin Institute website—www.esiw.com—for complete course descriptions, schedules and registration.)


CME Credits

With the exception of "Setting Up Your Esthetic Practice from A-Z," all of the ESI courses are evaluated and provide AMA PRA Category I CME credits for physicians and physician assistants, and CE credits for nurses, nurse practitioners and dentists.

Location

Currently, ESI classes are held in hotel facilities across the country, where clinical stations are set up for hands-on training. However, a 3,000-square-foot facility is currently under construction and will house the institute's permanent training facility in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Other Services

On-site, in-facility training is also available. Parker recommends contacting the institute directly to make arrangements. She also offers some consulting services, although due to her heavy schedule those arrangements are limited. 

Janet McCormick, owner of Spa Techniques Consulting, holds a master's degree in allied health management and a CIDESCO diploma. She can be reached at janmccormk@aol.com.