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Naperville Area Pain Center Points Way For The Future



By Michael Breen Dec. 5 at 1:23 p.m.

A recent report shows the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will transform the treatment of chronic pain...a health problem affecting 116 million American adults.

“We can’t wait. We want the government to step in,” says James Gruft M.D., founder of From Pain To Wellness in Oakbrook Terrace. The nationally known board-certified pain specialist has treated Chicago-area patients for over two decades.

Mandated by the ACA, The Institute of Medicine released its new blueprint for treating chronic pain this summer.[1] Its strategy calls for a “cultural transformation” and turns traditional concepts of pain management upside down.

The blue panel’s recommendations include 1) customized pain approaches for different ethnic groups, socioeconomic classes, genders, and other variables, 2) more stress on treatments that prevent future pain, 3) a greater focus on improving the patient’s overall quality of life and 4) extensive data outcomes to reward the most effective centers.

Dr. Gruft says, “The government seems to finally be encouraging, and rewarding, state of the art multi-disciplinary pain centers. The standard cookie-cutter approach of just using medications, physical therapy or interventions has not worked. It’s acknowledging that every patient perceives pain in his or her own unique way. Hopefully, these changes will soon be implemented at all pain clinics.”

At From Pain To Wellness every patient receives a customized care plan that along with physical therapy incorporates a tailor-made diet based on the patients unique nutritional status, stress management techniques, and special therapeutic lifestyle modifications.

“For instance,” says Dr. Gruft, “our center will mimic a patient’s home kitchen and teach them how to navigate that environment without pain. They’ll learn what specific motions to avoid. In the same vein patients spend up to three hours a day in a customized one-on-one physical therapy program, and they learn to prepare special pain-relieving food so they can continue that life-style modification at home.”

The goal is change a patient’s entire lifestyle so he can effectively transform his or her pain into something significantly more manageable. Under the ACA that comprehensive, preventive approach is being rewarded for the first time.

Better outcomes will also finally be rewarded. “Our success rate is far higher than average,” says Dr. Gruft. “That’s partly because of our comprehensive approach and partly because of the emphasis of our program on life-style modification. Now with accurate data outcomes we’ll finally be able to prove that...and be rewarded for that fact.”

The pain specialist says the ACA’s focus on wellness and preventive care may actually allow him to use “a larger set of tools” to help those with chronic pain. The center, for example, hopes to routinely perform hormonal and nutrient deficiency testing. He says the effects of nutritional treatment are also unique and doses should be customized.

“Our goal can’t just be to relieve pain,” says Dr. Gruft. “We literally have to transform our patients’ lives. The ACA finally acknowledges that for the first time. For us, the new era in pain management can’t come soon enough.”

From Pain To Wellness is located at One Trans Am Plaza #100, Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181 (630-627-7500) Web site: www.frompaintowellness.com