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CUTTING EDGE PHILOSOPHIES

12 doctors, 1 building, 1 focused plan



In late 2008, NS2 physicians and their staff of 50 nurses and healthcare professionals moved into a 50,000-square-foot facility in Flowood

Special to the Mississippi Business Journal

NS2 now state's most comprehensive spine care provider

By **LYNNE JETER** | CONTRIBUTOR
lynne.jeter@gmail.com

Every Friday at noon, the 12 physicians on staff at Mississippi's most comprehensive spine care practice, along with nonsurgical specialists, gather for a lunchtime conference.

Even though most cases are not odd or unique, opinions are solicited from everyone around the table. With seven board-certified spine surgeons in attendance — the largest number representing the specialty in one place anywhere in the state, including the University of Mississippi Medical Center — and each with their own niche, the patient whose case is being presented gets the enviable second opinion from many specialists at once.

“Our challenge is to treat each case as the most special and unique case because for the patient, it is the most important and critical case,” explained Jack Moriarty, M.D., one of seven board-certified spine surgeons on staff and chairman of NewSouth NeuroSpine (NS2) in

Flowood. “For that reason, we made a conscious decision to intentionally alter our Friday morning clinical schedule to meet together at noon and stay until 1 o'clock to present and hear cases. Holding these meetings is such a simple and obvious thing, but it wasn't being done by any of our individual practices, mainly because it requires a critical mass.”

After years of collaborating on spine care cases as a relatively cohesive unit, a dozen physicians covering four specialties — neurosurgery, orthopedic spine surgery, interventional pain management and physical medicine and rehabilitation — combined three spine surgery groups, a physical medicine practice and a pain management group in Central Mississippi to establish NS2 in 2008.

“In addition to being more efficient overall, combining our resources into a



Moriarty



Summers



Vohra

single practice allowed us to transfer patients between each other seamlessly and have easy access to patient records,” said Moriarity.

In late 2008, NS2 physicians and their staff of 50 nurses and healthcare professionals moved into a 50,000-square-foot facility in Flowood they designed as a place “we’d want our loved ones to go for spine care,” said Moriarity.

In addition to 30 exam rooms, digital X-ray and MRI technology, the building includes a pain management clinic and a physical therapy center equipped with a hydrotherapy pool, and space leased to a pain psychologist and a chiropractor.

Complementing its Division of Surgery, NS2’s Interventional Pain Medicine Division specializes in the performance of minimally invasive procedures — joint and spine injections, for example — that are used both diagnostically and therapeutically, with the goal of improving a patient’s pain and allowing an accelerated return to normal function.

Jeff Summers, M.D., one of two interventional pain specialists on staff, both fellowship-trained in pain management, said being able to address different facets of a patient’s chronic pain problem simultaneously is one of the advantages of a large multi-specialty practice.

“Rarely do patients with chronic pain have a single pain generator that accounts for all of the disabling aspects of their condition,” said Summers. “For example, patients with painful degenerative disc problems often have back pain, radiating nerve pain, gait disturbances and severe deconditioning. Often, addressing only a single component of the problem does little to improve the patient’s functional level. Coordinating therapeutic injections, for example, with a tailored rehab program allows the patient to take advantage of any pain relief from the injections to perform more aggressively in therapy. This often results in an accelerated improvement in function and allows a rapid return to pre-injury lifestyle.”

If surgical treatment isn’t the best solution for the patient, NS2 provides non-surgical and ancillary treatment options, also including physical medicine and rehabilitation, physical therapy and pain psychological services.

“The pain management side of our specialty involves the non-operative management of patients with chronic or acute musculoskeletal issues. Our job is to evaluate that person from a biomechanical standpoint to determine what may be contributing to their pain,” said Rahul Vohra, M.D., board-certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation and pain medicine.

NS2 physical medicine physicians manage pain medication treatment onsite when appropriate, and coordinate care with the pain division.

“We also work closely with a pain psychologist for patients who have chronic pain and are also dealing with depression and anxiety issues that can become quite overwhelming,” said Vohra. “Very few practices have access to a pain psychologist,

and none that I know have access to one full time. Usually a pain psychologist sees pain patients and also does family therapy. We made the decision to go this route because it became very clear to us that pain management for patients often isn’t enough. Surgery, medication and therapy are very useful treatments, but often you have to go above and beyond and treat the underlying psychological or psychiatric issues that are sometimes present in patients with chronic pain. We agreed long ago that it’s important to treat the whole person to achieve the best outcomes for patients.”

NS2 spine surgeons have privileges at River Oaks Hospital, a Health Management Associates (HMA) facility in Flowood that Healthgrades recently named Mississippi’s leading spine surgery hospital and one of the top 5 percent of spine surgery hospitals nationwide. NS2 staff performed 99 percent of the surveyed surgeries during the study.



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The doctors of the NS2 team in the foyer of their new building in Flowood.