

# SPOTLIGHT ON: THE SPINE AND PAIN CENTER

Periodically, as a result of a suggestion in our *Network Pulse* Readership Survey, we highlight a St. Luke's Physician Group (SLPG) practice.

The Spine and Pain Center, located at St. Luke's Quakertown Hospital, is one of the most recent practices to join our Network. Under the direction of Scott J. Loev, DO, The Spine and Pain Center provides the latest specialized medical and surgical treatments to reduce patients' pain and improve their quality of life.

The practice treats patients who are referred for pain caused by work-related injuries, spinal cord problems, cancer and other chronic conditions. Dr. Loev, who founded The Spine and Pain Center, uses an array of therapies including injections, nerve blocks, spinal cord stimulation, radiofrequency and medication management.

"A typical patient of The Spine and Pain Center experiences neck or back pain with additional pain radiating down his or her arm or leg," explains Dr. Loev. "An MRI may reveal a herniated disc. We examine this patient in the office, review the patient's medical history, look at the MRI and then discuss a treatment plan — which may include a steroid injection under fluoroscopy to reduce inflammation and pain. Some patients require more than one injection. If the patient is not a candidate for an epidural steroid injection, we discuss other options available to us, including non-interventional methods. If the source of pain is not as clear cut, we also use diagnostic procedures to help determine the etiology of the patient's symptoms."

Dr. Loev gives a lot of credit for the success of the practice to the "terrific" staff, consisting of an office manager, Lorraine Pasieka; two LPNs, Peggy Eastwood and Susan



Dr. Loev treats a patient.

Teti-Finnegan; and a receptionist, Carol Lacock. He also pays tribute to St. Luke's Hospital & Health Network for enabling him to tailor his practice to serve his patients' best interests. He explains, "I'm a great believer in doing the right thing for my patients. Some clearly need interventional treatment, but for others, the cause of the pain isn't that obvious. For those patients, our services are diagnostic, and in some cases, I refer my patients to a neurologist, surgeon or other specialists for more targeted treatment. It isn't unusual for me to work out a medication management plan, supplemented by physical therapy, for example — whatever helps the patient."

He continues on the subject of our Network being a good fit for The Spine and Pain Center. "Before joining St. Luke's Physician Group, I came to St. Luke's Quakertown Hospital once a week. I loved the atmosphere here. Doctors communicate extremely well and the patient care is excellent. The administration has given me the resources I needed to build my practice, and the surrounding community is a great place for my practice and my family. We are looking forward to our move to The Bone and Joint Institute (see story in the December 2008/January 2009 issue) this spring. Our office will be part of the integrated orthopaedic care offered in Quakertown."

Dr. Loev graduated from the University of Pennsylvania in 1991. After finishing medical school at the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, he completed a residency in anesthesiology at Temple University and a fellowship in Interventional Pain Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Dr. Loev also received the 2005 Pfizer Scholars in Pain Medicine Award, which honors a fellow for outstanding contributions to research and patient care in pain management.

Perhaps the reason why Dr. Loev relates so well to his patients has something to do with the broad range of experiences he had before entering medicine. His bachelor's degree was in history, which prepared him to work in the field that attracted him in those days, politics,



Front: Carol Lacock, receptionist; and Lorraine Pasieka, office manager. Back: Susan Teti-Finnegan, LPN; and Dr. Loev.

where he could help people. At risk of being the only member of his immediate family to embark on a non-medical career, he moved to Washington, D.C., to work on political campaigns. Eventually, when the fund-raising aspect of politics turned him off, he got a job at the Holocaust Museum (before it opened) and enrolled at the University of Maryland, where he took premed classes and worked in a neuroscience lab at Johns Hopkins University, where he published several papers in leading journals.

"I planned to go into internal medicine after my internship, but became interested in critical care," says Dr. Loev. "I enjoyed anesthesia during my residency, but when it came time came for my rotation in pain management, a subspecialty of anesthesia, I found my calling. I realized there was more interaction with patients." And that's the way it is today at The Spine and Pain Center... a healthy blend of personal relationships, expert diagnosis and pain-relieving treatment.



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