



Published May 07, 2008 11:40 am - With a new location at Geisinger's Outpatient Surgery Center on Woodbine Lane, the growing department can now begin its innovative approach to pain management, which focuses on keeping patients active in the treatment process as soon as they step through the door. Reposted with permission.

Relocation Woodbine welcomes new clinics

Change a relief for pain center

By Jaime North

The Danville News

MAHONING TWP. -- For years, Dr. John Han and his staff have envisioned new ways for Geisinger's pain therapy center to engage its patients in their treatment.

The staff just didn't have the space to bring those ideas into reality.

With a new location at Geisinger's Outpatient Surgery Center on Woodbine Lane, the growing department can begin its innovative approach to pain management, which focuses on keeping patients active in the treatment process as soon as they step through the door.

"Patients are coming here and seeing a multi-specialty practice," said Dr. Han, Geisinger's director of pain therapy. "A lot of our patients come here for treatment of back and neck pain. This facility lets patients come to one place and have several specialists come to them. We are able to focus more on the patient than ever.

"We didn't have that before."

Geisinger moves

The extra space -- 16,000 square feet, or three times more than what they had before -- is a byproduct of Geisinger restructuring. The recent move, also made by the dermatology clinic and sleep disorder center, is part of Geisinger's plan to export non-acute care services off the medical center campus. Other departments, mostly administrative services, will soon find homes in newly constructed office buildings in Buckhorn and downtown Danville.

For the pain therapy center, the new clinic at Woodbine is a blessing in disguise.

"Just the other day I walked in and saw a patient being seen by a psychologist," Dr. Han said. "That was something I've been waiting to see for a long time, and now we have that capability. We don't want people to think we're just a place filled with needles."

Expanded services

Among the expanded services include a behavioral medicine specialist, psychologist, rehabilitation medicine therapist, orthopedic spine specialist, and neurospine services. Some of the services are not specifically situated in the clinic but are located within the Woodbine facility, Dr. Han said, a benefit of the new location.

The center also has four interventional pain specialists, three physician assistants, two nursing assistants, three receptionists and 13 nurses. More positions will be added as the need grows, Dr. Han said, particularly with the specialty services.

New programs

One of the programs Dr. Han hopes to soon launch is an educational video presentation on the wide screen television in the waiting room, so patients can see what services are provided and what to expect when they're seen by a physician. Another patient-guided program will also be in the waiting room, where patients will input their personal information into computers while they wait for their appointment.

"We want them use their time productively," Dr. Han said. "It will get the patients primed and ready for their treatment."

Once inside the facility, there are 19 exam rooms (compared to eight at the medical center), four fully equipped procedure rooms, and a recovery area with 19 bays -- four positioned in the corners for more privacy for certain patients with greater needs.

New technology

Additionally, each of the exam rooms are connected to a communication light system at the nurses' station to indicate which rooms have patients, which patients have yet to be seen and which ones are ready for the next stage of their treatment. A light board is attached to the wall across from the stations.

"This enables us to keep track of patient flow," Dr. Han said. "It also allows us to measure how well we do, if we're seeing patients quickly enough and how long they have to wait between consultations."

Patient flow

Managing patient flow is key to improving the center's care delivery, Dr. Han said.

"Our patient volume has quadrupled in three years," Dr. Han said. "There are a lot of patients with pain. I don't think we have even hit the tip of the iceberg."

Dr. Han said the new location has dramatically improved the time patients have to wait for an appointment.

"The average waiting time was three to four months," Dr. Han said. "Now, because of the expanded facility allocating more space, the average waiting time has been cut to two to three weeks. That's a huge change. More so than we expected, which is great."

Measuring success

Improved patient access and a wider scope of services are just a few of the luxuries the pain therapy center now enjoys at Woodbine, according to Dr. Han, adding that the center's success comes down to how well the patient responds to treatment.

"When patients are active players in their care, their quality of life and pain improves," Dr. Han said. "We try to focus on things that make a difference in long-term outcomes. Now, we're in better position to do just that."

E-mail comments to jnorth@thedanvillenews.com.



Dr. John Han stands with one of the new digital x-ray machines in the new pain management clinic at Geisinger's Woodbine Lane facility.
Robert Inglis/The Daily Item