

· SPECIAL TWIN CITIES SECTION ·

MDNEWS[®]

■ A BUSINESS & PRACTICE MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE | ABOUT PHYSICIANS | FROM PHYSICIANS | FOR PHYSICIANS ■

The Future of **HEALTH CARE**

...is here!





TRAINING

Medical College of Wisconsin
Residency in physical medicine
and rehabilitation, University of
Minnesota Medical School
M.D. degree, St. John's University
B.S. degree

BOARD CERTIFICATIONS

Pain medicine
Electrodiagnostic medicine
Physical medicine and rehabilitation

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Minnesota Physiatric Society,
President
American Academy of Pain
Management
American Academy of Pain Medicine
American Academy of Physical
Medicine and Rehabilitation
International Spine Intervention
Society
American Society of Interventional
Pain Physicians
Twin Cities Medical Society
Minnesota Medical Association



Andrew J. Will, M.D.
BOARD-CERTIFIED PHYSIATRIST,
TWIN CITIES PAIN CLINIC

D EVELOPING HIS LOVE for medicine at an early age, Andrew J. Will, M.D., is now a private-practice physician specializing in nonsurgical care of spinal and musculoskeletal pain and electrodiagnostic studies at the Twin Cities Pain Clinic in Edina, MN. Though he foresees change in the future of health care, he believes in the idea that if you take care of the patient first, everything else will take care of itself.

Q What is the most significant change you have seen in health care in the last decade?

A: The most noticeable change is the interest people now have in their health care. The Internet has enabled patients to educate themselves about their health much more than in the past. Instead of listening to the doctor's orders, patients are now actively participating in their health care decisions. Also, as cost of care has risen, I see patients taking more responsibility in finding the most economical way of managing their health.

Q What do you think will be the biggest change in health care in the next 10 years?

A: Right now, health care reform is on the front burner. While it seems primarily a political discussion, I believe it's critical that patients and physicians continue to drive health care policy.

Q Why are you passionate about medicine?

A: Much of my passion stems from the fact that I just feel fortunate to be a physician. As physicians, we see patients when they are often facing the biggest crisis of their lives. At my practice, patients are experiencing severe pain. Whether that pain is acute or chronic, our clinical team at the Twin Cities Pain Clinic takes the time to listen and work through issues to find the appropriate treatment. Our patients often tell us that we make a positive difference in their lives — I can't help but feel passionate about providing that kind of care.

Q What are some of the advances in technology that are helping to shape the pain management field?

A: Electricity is the new drug. The neurostimulator — a device used to intercept pain signals along the spinal cord — has been around for decades, but recent improvements have made it much more effective and easier to use. Since the side effects and risks of this type of therapy are relatively low, it is becoming increasingly popular among patients.

Q What do you see as the most important issue that patients are facing today and will face in the next five to 10 years when it comes to pain management?

A: The most important issue in pain management is always how to maximize function and maintain an active lifestyle. The majority of our patients are still in their working years, and the pain can be extremely disruptive to their careers and relationships. The main issue continues to be how to find a treatment that allows the patient to get maximum pain relief while limiting the side effects so they can return to their active lifestyle.

Q As a physician and a business owner, what are the benefits and challenges?

A: The biggest benefit is that our clinic is able to operate with physician leadership. I believe physicians have the best understanding of health care overall, and this makes them excellent leaders of clinics, hospitals or even health care businesses. I think it is important for physicians to be leaders in health care and having a practice like this allows for physician directed care.

The challenge is that practicing medicine and managing a practice does require a lot of time and energy. I don't mind it, but I'm sure my wife does.

Q Do you see a shift in your specialty that other physicians should be aware of?

A: Like all specialties, there is a definite focus on trying to find additional treatment options for patients. As the list

of options in pain management grows, it's being divided into two categories: invasive and noninvasive methods. Some pain management clinics tend to focus on one or the other. In fact, on a national level, there are even organizations that encourage one over the other. However, patients can benefit from a combination of these categories, and I think our clinic does an excellent job of providing the full spectrum of pain management care.

Q What or who inspired you to pursue a health care career?

A: My grandfather and father, who were both medical doctors, were my inspiration. I was 14 when my grandfather died. He had been a family physician in a small Ohio town for 50 years. Virtually the whole town came to his funeral. He had delivered most of them as babies! The stories they told me about him were quite inspirational and certainly contributed to my desire to be a physician. My father has also been a great role model to me. He is a retired general surgeon, and we still talk about medicine frequently. We traveled to Honduras together last year to do volunteer medical work, and this year he came to observe me do a neurostimulator implant surgery.

Q What message about health and wellness do you use most to communicate with your patients?

A: I often tell patients, "You are the most important person in your health care team. You are the one that will ultimately make the choice about what you eat, how you exercise, how you work, how you play and what health care services you will use. Make your health a priority and make healthy decisions."

To learn more about the Twin Cities Pain Clinic, visit www.twincitiespainclinic.com.