

CONTACT PERSON: Robin Jennings

Director, Communications

Excelsa Health

724-837-1781 TEL

724-515-4483 CELL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NEUROSURGEON TO DISCUSS LOW BACK PAIN, NON-SURGICAL AND SURGICAL TREATMENT OPTIONS

GREENSBURG, PA, June 11, 2010 ... Low back pain is one of the top reasons patients seek medical care. Neurosurgeon Matthew Wetzel, MD, says it's the fifth most common reason with 80 percent of people seeking medical care for it at some time in their life, and up to 50 percent experiencing lower back pain yearly.

"While most people do not have a serious spinal condition and get better within several weeks, there are a different types of low back pain, including common degenerative spinal conditions that may need surgical treatment, if other measures fail," explained Dr. Wetzel, who is on staff at Excelsa Health.

Dr. Wetzel will explore these various types of back pain and discuss both non-surgical and surgical treatment options when he presents *Does Back Pain Slow you Down?* 6:30 p.m., Monday, June 28, Norwin Medical Commons, Route 30, North Huntingdon.

Back pain - while often treatable - can be debilitating for the sufferer as well as a drain on the workplace with one-third of all disability costs in the United States due to lower back disorders.

"Getting treatment regardless of type of lower back pain can greatly enhance your quality of life and get you back to work or to the activities you normally enjoy," said Dr. Wetzel.

"Non-specific back pain" is the most common type. Often called mechanical low back pain, it's typically due to muscle or ligament strains and sprains and arthritis. "Fortunately, nearly 60 percent of people with these types of injuries or conditions can recover within one week, while most everyone else recovers within three to four weeks

with treatments like non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications (NSAIDs) or muscle relaxants, and in some cases, physical therapy or chiropractic care,” noted Dr. Wetzel.

Other categories of low back pain include potentially serious spinal conditions and sciatica, or back-related leg symptoms. “Red flags,” which Dr. Wetzel will cover, such as fever or having a history of cancer or trauma to the spine may indicate a more serious issue, like an infection, fracture or tumor.

Those experiencing sciatic-type low back pain feel pain radiating down one or both legs. The cause is usually due to nerve compression from degenerative spine conditions such as lumbar disc herniation, lumbar stenosis, or lumbar spondylolisthesis. The pain due to these conditions may be amenable to surgery, if non-surgical measures fail. Dr. Wetzel will discuss these conditions in more detail, as well as their treatment.

To register for this program, contact Excelsa Health’s Call Center, toll free, 1-877-771-1234 or register online, www.excelahealth.org.