

Doctor treats pain through office, magazine, website

BY MARK R. MOSS
Special Correspondent

Pain is as much a part of life as death is its inevitable end.

That's physical pain, and it can fall into two groups. The pains with the small 'p' are memorable but fleeting — like tangling with a jellyfish at the beach, or that occasional gout flare-up, or



Rauck

a tender knee after a long morning run.

The capital 'P' pain includes such conditions as an aggravated lower back, tormenting headaches, cancer, diabetes and multiple sclerosis (MS). These are the types of pains

that keep doctors like Richard L. Rauck busy. His thriving practice includes eight physicians serving 15,000 to 20,000 patients a year out of spacious, well-appointed offices on Kimel Park Drive.

Carolinas Pain Institute and Center for Clinical Research was founded in 1986 by Rauck, 56, who is its medical director and CEO. In 2008, the practice start-

ed a magazine, PainPathways, a slick, well-edited quarterly publication with a current circulation of 65,000. In December, the magazine announced that it had re-launched a new and improved website, painpathways.org. Treating pain can lead in many directions.

After Rauck finished Wake Forest University School of Medi-

cine in 1982, he was on his way to becoming an anesthesiologist when he realized he wanted more patient contact than that specialty offered.

He was doing postgraduate work in Cincinnati, Ohio, in the early 1980s when he met "the guru of pain," P. Prithvi Raj, "who really got me interested in pain

PAIN, Page A8

Pain

From Page A1

medicine," he said. He returned to Wake Forest and started the pain center.

"Back in '86, there were probably a half-dozen pain centers in the country," Rauck said. Pain treatment was "very much in its infancy."

The medical profession has always "thought — historically — of pain as a symptom. You break your shoulder you have pain, that's a symptom. You're chopping wood and you get chest pain, that's a symptom. ... We don't focus too much on those situations," he said.

But there are times "when we think of pain as the disease." As an exam-

ple, he cited the pain that MS patients face. They are afflicted with two diseases: MS and chronic pain.

"There would be two approaches," he said about the treatment. "Clearly you want to treat the MS as best you can and relieve the pain. And a lot of times we have to focus on the pain, and that's where we get involved."

Another example would be cancer patients who have undergone radiation treatments that may have left them with chronic pain syndrome.

Most of the patients the institute treats suffer from lower back pain, Rauck said. And there are those suffering from neurologic disorders, rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis, headaches and fibromyalgia.

In addition to the institute, Rauck oversees The Center for Clinical Research, LLC, which is responsible for conducting clinical trials and working with the Food and Drug Administration on particular projects. There's also the Sceptor Pain Foundation, the nonprofit arm of Rauck's empire that also does medical research and operates an outreach program for those treated in VA hospitals. It also sponsors a cycling team and will be heavily involved in this year's Winston-Salem Cycling Classic.

But Rauck's "labor of love" is PainPathways, the quarterly publication he and a partner, Dr. James North, launched five years ago with a \$500,000 investment. It is the official mag-

azine of the World Institute of Pain (WIP) and the Pain Society of Carolinas, Inc. Rauck is the president-elect of WIP.

"We felt there was an unmet need for helping patients to understand their disease and chronic pain better," he said, explaining his reasons behind the magazine. "To try to give them hope. To try to help them know what treatments were out there and available for them. To let them know of new treatments that they may not have heard of from their doctor. To let them know that they're not alone in their fight against a life of chronic pain. It just seemed to be a good thing (to do).

"I would say," added Rauck, the magazine's editor-in-chief, "that in the

seven years I've done this, it's been one of my real favorite projects. We get a lot of very favorable feedback."

Rauck said PainPathways' closest competition is WebMD, but that website doesn't focus solely on pain. Although print publishing is going through trying times, PainPathways is financially stable, he said.

Coach Mike Krzyzewski of Duke, former talk show host Montell Williams and actress Naomi Judd are some of the celebrities who have graced PainPathways' covers.

"When a patient is in a waiting room," explained Amy Taylor North, the magazine's senior managing editor, "they see lots of medical-looking pam-

phlets or brochures or publications, so we really wanted (PainPathways) to stand out. ... We wanted it to be picked up. We wanted it to be read. Whether you're famous or not, pain strikes everyone. It makes a difference when people see that there are celebrities who are struggling with the same issues."

Readers can get information, which is updated daily, about treatments and pain-related issues by visiting the website. It's also a place where people can share ideas, North said.

"People in pain are really interested in sharing information with each other because something one person's doing may help another. The website is a way to keep everybody connected," she said.