

AUSTIN

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Pain Specialists of Austin
The **Pathway**
to **Eliminating**
Pain

The Pathway to Eliminating Pain

BY DEFINITION, AN ANESTHESIOLOGIST'S CHARGE IS TO CREATE A CONTROLLED ENVIRONMENT AND PAINLESS SURGICAL EXPOSURE FOR ANY PATIENT UNDERGOING A PROCEDURE. AT PAIN SPECIALISTS OF AUSTIN, PHYSICIANS HAVE GONE ABOVE AND BEYOND THE BASIC JOB DESCRIPTION TO OFFER INTERVENTIONAL PAIN MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES DESIGNED TO PROVIDE PAIN RELIEF OUTSIDE THE OPERATING ROOM.

YEARS OF EXPERIENCE in anesthesiology led Vivek Mahendru, M.D., Harvard fellowship-trained physician, founder of Pain Specialists of Austin and Medical Director of The Pain Relief SurgiCenter, to his interest in the field of pain management. He became versed in the specialty

following multiple fellowships in pain therapy at Harvard Medical School and Texas Tech University. Since 1995, Dr. Mahendru has been sharing his expertise with patients in Central Texas.

Pain Specialists of Austin — formerly known as Central Texas Pain Institute — is composed of four board-certified

anesthesiologists, all fellowship trained in pain management, who see patients at the practice's seven locations. The specialists treat patients suffering from any and all pain presentations, ranging from cervical neck pain to cancer-related pain, with an extensive variety of diagnostic and interventional techniques. Pain Specialists of Austin



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Left to right: Vivek Mahendru, M.D., Christopher Vije, M.D., Christopher Manees, M.D., and Tameta Clark, M.D.

even provides rapid care through its FASTRAC program, a service that delivers diagnostic and therapeutic injections to the appropriate patients within 24 hours of physician referral.

“From Killeen to Kyle, we provide a significant breadth and depth of services for pain management throughout Central Texas,” says Dr. Mahendru. “We want to resolve pain issues one patient at a time.”

From Head to Toe

The list of syndromes treated at Pain Specialists of Austin is almost as long as the list of pain syndromes known to the medical community. The practice most commonly sees patients with back and spine pain. Its scope of care, however, covers pain in any area of the body, including intractable arm, back, headache, leg and neck pain; neuromuscular and nerve conditions and neuralgias; spinal conditions, including disc herniations, sacroiliitis, sciatica and stenosis; and surgical and trauma-related pain.

The Killeen office serves the military community of Fort Hood in addition to the general patient population. This includes active-duty members, families of military personnel and those injured in the line of duty. While Dr. Mahendru and his colleagues consider conservative approaches when deliberating on a patient’s care, often, many of the available options have already been applied without success.

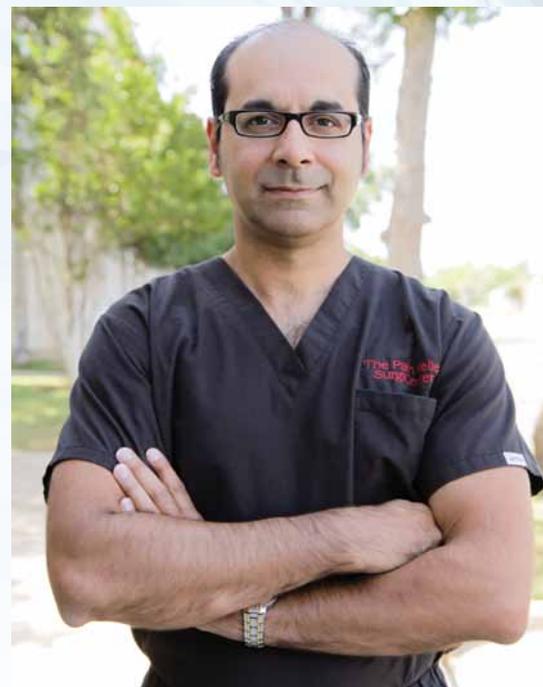
“By the time they come to us, our patients have been through chiropractic care, physical therapy and different medical managements. They’ve seen surgeons and other physicians, and they are looking for the next step in the treatment course,” says Dr. Mahendru. “We put together a very concise, comprehensive treatment plan that is tailor-made for that individual patient.”

Following referral, a patient’s initial visit involves an evaluation of his or her condition and its history, where it is presenting and the etiology of

the pain. The exam is coupled with a thorough review of any computed tomography scans, magnetic resonance imaging and X-rays the patient may have already undergone, or imaging exams Dr. Mahendru schedules, as well as reviews of laboratory reports and previous physicians’ evaluations. Depending on the case’s indications, the specialists may refer patients to a network of community partnerships for additional acupuncture, nutritional, physical therapy and psychological consults. These outside sources contribute to Pain Specialists of Austin’s team-oriented approach to address all aspects of patient care.

The Next Step

The treatment teams at Pain Specialists of Austin are made up not only of a physician and a nurse practitioner or physician assistant, but also the patients themselves. These providers are Christopher Vije, M.D., Christopher Manees, M.D., Tameta Clark, M.D., Pat Serna, PA-C, and Kim Zaydel, NP. Dr. Mahendru and his colleagues encourage patients and their families to be active participants in the different components of care, which helps ensure the success of their outcomes.



Vivek Mahendru, M.D.

Typically, medication management may be among the elements of a patient’s treatment plan. Dr. Mahendru explains that patients who have been placed on a medication schedule to treat their pain sometimes ask to be weaned off the medication, as it interferes with their quality of life. In addition, traditional pain narcotics prove to be one-dimensional treatment options when compared to the dual uses of interventional approaches.

A LOCATION NEAR YOU

PAIN IS NOT restricted to a single ZIP code, and neither are the services of Pain Specialists of Austin. Each of the practice’s seven convenient offices located throughout the Central Texas region offers the same level of care and full armamentarium of pain management treatments. This ensures access to pain relief for patients in every neighborhood and town, including:

- + Bastrop in the Lakeside Professional Building at 3101 Highway 71, Suite 211
- + Georgetown at 1904 Railroad St.
- + Killeen at 3816 S. Clear Creek Road, Suite E
- + Kyle at 5103 Kyle Center Drive, Suite 104
- + North Austin at 4100 Duval Road, Building 3, Suite 200
- + Round Rock at 16020 Park Valley Drive
- + South Austin at 2500 W. William Cannon Drive, Suite 206

All offices can be reached via the Pain Specialists of Austin main phone number — (512) 485-7200 — or toll-free at (855) 876-PAIN (7246).

For more information, visit www.painspecialistsofAustin.com.



Michelle Newkamp

THE FACE OF COMPASSIONATE CARE

LOOKING BACK AT the past 17 years, Vivek Mahendru, M.D., Harvard fellowship-trained physician, founder of Pain Specialists of Austin and Medical Director of The Pain Relief SurgiCenter, points to one of the most important factors in the growth of his practice: clinical administrator Michelle Newkamp.

The clinically trained phlebotomist, nationally certified medical assistant and office assistant has played a vital role in managing the ins and outs of Pain Specialists of Austin since joining Dr. Mahendru in 1997. Even more valuable is her compassionate interaction with patients. Newkamp educates patients and families about the pain syndromes they are experiencing and the techniques Pain Specialists of Austin will employ to help patients achieve a pain-free lifestyle.

Newkamp completed her medical training at Allied Health Careers before transitioning from student to instructor. She taught medical assisting, was instrumental in building the school's overarching curriculum in that field and helped guide the organization as a member of its governing board.

“The advantage of interventional pain management is that we have the possibility of eliminating the need for medical management almost completely. With these techniques, you can also do provocation testing to elicit the etiology of the pain,” says Dr. Mahendru. “Once we do that, we have a solid diagnosis in place, allowing symptoms to be improved with targeted therapeutic techniques. This approach promotes a much quicker response without the side effects of medication.”

Pain Specialists of Austin performs a wide variety of procedures, including medial branch blocks, discograms, epidurals, facet joint and steroid injections,

neuroablative procedures and vertebroplasties. When treating lumbar back pain, Dr. Mahendru may employ a lumbar transforaminal epidural steroid injection to administer medication directly to an isolated area of the spine. The fluoroscopic-guided procedure involves placing a needle in the spine's foraminal space close to the nerve root and soaking the source of the patient's pain with a steroid-anesthetic mixture.

When addressing intractable arm, back, leg and spine pain, Pain Specialists of Austin can turn to neuroaugmentation techniques to target negative pain impulses emanating from the injured or diseased nerves. A spinal cord stimulator

implant disrupts such signals with its own electrical impulses. The procedure involves using wire leads connected to electrodes and inserted into the epidural space to accurately locate the problematic nerves in a preliminary trial stage.

The electrodes override the nerve or nerve bundle's pain signals to the brain, replacing the patient's pain with a pleasant sensation. The wire leads are also linked to a temporary stimulator device. Patients typically use the trial mechanism for several days before returning for a permanent implantable pulse generator and battery, placed under the skin in the buttocks or abdomen.

Dr. Mahendru is also able to provide pain relief for patients suffering from cancer-related discomfort. Often, the end stages of terminal cancer are accompanied, for example, by spinal pain as the metastatic disease spreads to the vertebrae and discs. Causing distinctive side effects, pain medications can significantly impact the time that patients have left with their families. Pain Specialists of Austin can effectively treat the tissue and nerve bundles compromised by the cancer while granting the patient an alert, pain-free quality of life.

“Pain management has come a long way with the advancement of technology and drug-delivery mechanisms,” says Dr. Mahendru. “We can make a difference in the lives of these patients so a mother can tend to her children, so a father can go with his child to play baseball, so couples can enjoy their quality of life. There is hope, and there are great options.” ■

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