

Spine center emphasizes nonsurgical treatment options for back & neck pain

It's estimated that 4 out of 5 adults will have an attack of back pain at some point in their lives. One of every three on-the-job injuries is related to back or neck strain.

The good news is that many people can get back to activity without surgery, according to Dr. Mark Downey, a specialist in back and neck pain and founder of SpineGroup Alabama. In 2018, Dr. Downey founded SpineGroup Alabama as a specialized spine center approach for back and neck pain. The new spine center facility, which opened in early 2019, includes space for physician offices, X-ray, an internal injection suite and spine therapy. It is located at 10 Old Montgomery Highway in Homewood, an affluent suburb of Birmingham.

"Our goal is to exhaust nonsurgical treatment options in advance of spine surgery," Dr. Downey explains. "If surgery is necessary, we can refer to affiliated spine surgeons who emphasize a minimally invasive approach to shorten the length of the incision, lessen time in the hospital and speed return to activity with a less painful recovery."

SpineGroup Alabama combines under one roof: Dr. Downey and Dr. Alex Cotter, who are board-certified in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation; two injection suites; and an internal spine therapy department and exercise gym.

Dr. Downey notes that employers, health insurance companies and patients

now understand that there are effective nonsurgical treatment options for back and neck pain and like the concept of a multi-disciplinary approach combining several diagnostic and treatment services under one roof for the convenience of the back and neck pain patient.



The new spine center facility includes X-ray, spine therapy and an internal injection suite so back and neck patients don't have to drive around town to multiple locations, from a physician office, to an ambulatory surgery center and therapy office. The internal injection suite eliminates all the red tape associated with a hospital facility or ASC. Patients can have their pain-relieving injection in 10 minutes and go home 30 minutes later.

SpineGroup Alabama is the only spine center in the State of Alabama to be included in SpineCenterNetwork.com, the only national listing of multi-disciplinary spine centers emphasize a multi-disciplinary approach and patient education.

"Many times herniated disc symptoms like numbness or weakness in a hand or foot can be relieved in our spine center in only 10 minutes and the patient goes home 30 minutes later," explains Dr. Cotter. "Our internal injection suite removes the hassle of having to be admitted to a surgery center or hospital outpatient center, which can consume a half day."

Dr. Downey and Dr. Cotter are proficient in the use of lumbar and cervical interventional pain procedures. "We take the time to educate patients so they understand the cause of their back or neck problem and how to relieve symptoms," says Dr. Cotter.



The spine center includes a Physical Medicine MD, X-ray, an internal injection suite and spine therapy — all under one roof.



PHYSICIAN BIOS

Mark J. Downey, MD

Board-certified Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
Interventional Spine Physiatrist

As a physiatrist, Dr. Downey specializes in diagnosis and non-surgical treatment of pain-related spinal disorders. He is board certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) since 2007 and uses his comprehensive spine and musculoskeletal training to determine the appropriate line of treatment for a variety of spinal conditions. Specializing in interventional spine, he is able to offer fluoroscopic spinal injection procedures to eliminate spine-related pain and restore normal activities and function.



Dr. Mark Downey is a native of Anniston, Alabama. He has been in practice in Birmingham, Alabama for more than 12 years and has performed more than 30,000 spinal procedures to help patients recover from back and neck pain and get back to activity. His practice serves as a referral center for general and complex non-surgical spinal problems in the region. He maintains one of the busiest spine practices in Alabama.

Dr. Mark Downey is a graduate of Samford University in Birmingham. He received his medical degree from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and completed his residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) at UAB.

Following his residency training, he completed additional training in interventional spine procedures making him proficient in cervical, thoracic and lumbar injections. Over the past two years, he has become a primary referral source for thoracic and lumbar compression fractures, performing over 100 kyphoplasty procedures in his in-office surgical suite.

Alex Cotter, MD

Board-certified Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
Board-certified Pain Medicine
Interventional Spine Physiatrist

Dr. Alex Cotter uses his background in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation as well as Pain Medicine to provide comprehensive non-surgical treatment for a variety of spinal conditions. Specializing in interventional spine, he offers fluoroscopic spinal injection procedures to relieve spine-related pain and restore patients' normal activities and function.



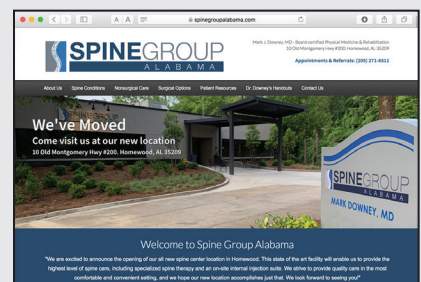
Dr. Cotter is a native of Mobile, Alabama. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Alabama and his medical degree from University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Medicine. After completing his transition year at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center in Memphis, he returned to UAB for his residency in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, where he served as chief resident. After residency he culminated his training with an ACGME accredited fellowship in Pain Medicine at UAB. Dr. Cotter is proficient in cervical, thoracic, lumbar, and major joint injections using fluoroscopy and ultrasound.

As part of his fellowship training, Dr. Cotter is proficient in the use of neuromodulation for pain relief for cervical and lumbar pain. In 2020, Dr. Cotter joined SpineGroup Alabama in the practice's mission to become Alabama's first Spine Center of Excellence.

Dr. Cotter and his wife Jacqueline live in Birmingham. He spends his leisure time traveling, hiking, camping and grilling out. He and Jacqueline especially enjoy exploring the country's beautiful national parks. Dr. Cotter has even been known to pick up his trumpet for a Mardi Gras parade in Mobile.

PATIENT EDUCATION TOOLS

SpineGroup Alabama provides several Patient Education Tools on back and neck pain for primary care physicians. Physicians can request 20 free copies of the 36-page Home Remedy Book and Symptom Chart for their patients by calling 205-271-6511 or by e-mailing a request to SpineGroupAlabama@gmail.com. The spine center also has an online encyclopedia on spine at SpineGroupAlabama.com.



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