

## Peter Fotinakes, MD Sleep Medicine Specialist

*What do you see as the most exciting advances in sleep medicine?*

For many years, the medical community ignored the fact that one-third of our lives is spent sleeping and didn't consider that things are actively happening at night to create illnesses presenting in the day time. One in 10 adult males and one in 20 adult females who have sleep apnea should be treated, yet many still don't realize it. Sleep apnea is widespread and becoming more widely known. Treatments have evolved with CPAP, BPAP and surgical interventions.

Also, in the last few years new research on narcolepsy, previously considered idiopathic, has determined that the cause is related to the deterioration of nerve cells in the hypothalamus. This has opened the door for treatment advances.

*What's your opinion of the impending Medicare ruling authorizing payment of home sleep studies?*

We are concerned that this may open the door for abuses to occur if non-accredited centers are giving out holter monitors and not interpreting results appropriately. Many patients will still need conventional testing and therapy by an accredited lab, although our Sleep Center

lab does plan to begin providing home studies in the next few months.

*What makes the St. Joseph Hospital Sleep Center unique?*

We deal with all sleep disorders and we're accredited by the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. Southern California has one of the highest concentrations of sleep centers in the world, but only a handful of them in Orange County are accredited.

*If you chose another profession outside of medicine, what would it be?*

I went into medicine because I am people-oriented and interested in science. I really enjoyed being a professor at UCI, so I'd have to say teaching. I'm happy that I've been able to work in a profession I love and continue to do so in spite of the trials and tribulations associated with healthcare nowadays.

*What solutions do you see ahead for healthcare?*

I suspect there will be a compromise between the people who want universal healthcare and the status quo. We need a new method to cover catastrophic illness and injury. I've seen individuals go bankrupt due to a healthcare crisis, and that shouldn't happen.

*Where is your favorite local place?*

I'd say Pacific Coast Highway on a Saturday morning. I take out my frustrations and do my meditation on two wheels, riding my bike from Long Beach to Newport.

*Peter Fotinakes, MD, serves as Medical Director of the Sleep Disorders Center at St. Joseph Hospital and is board certified in neurology. A native of Orange County, he received his bachelor's degree from Chapman University. There he met his wife of more than 30 years, Joyce Kakkis, M.D., who runs an outpatient practice in Long Beach focusing on menopause care. He completed his medical degree and residency at UCI. While there he was so impressed by the work of sleep pioneer Dr. John Sasson that he was drawn into the field. After 10 years in private practice and eight years as Medical Director of UCI and as an associate professor, in 2002 he retired from academics and joined the St. Joseph Hospital Sleep Disorders Center team.*



A PUBLICATION FROM THE ST. JOSEPH HOSPITAL MEDICAL STAFF OFFICE

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