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DIRECTOR OF CEDARS-SINAI'S FOOT AND ANKLE CENTER SAYS THAT OPTIONS ABOUND TO TREAT CHRONIC FOOT PAIN

LOS ANGELES (AUGUST 2, 2006) – Author Dianna Edwards and her husband enjoy active vacations, from exploring Mayan and Aztec ruins in Mexico to taking walking tours through Scotland. So when chronic foot pain sidelined her after bunion surgery, Edwards began an extensive search for medical options to end her pain and restore her mobility.

In the process, she sent an e-mail message to the Orthopedic Surgery Department at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, and 10 minutes later received a call from Glenn B. Pfeffer, M.D.

“I was shocked by his quick response,” said Edwards, who had recently moved to California where her husband produces a network television program. “He hadn’t even unpacked the boxes in his new office yet.”

Pfeffer, a board-certified orthopedic surgeon who is also a specialist in foot and ankle surgery and hand and microvascular surgery, had also recently moved to California to become the first director of Cedars-Sinai’s Foot and Ankle Center which opened in January 2006. The center sees patients who have problems ranging from bunions and hammer toes to sports injuries or arthritis involving the foot or ankle.

Edwards explained that she had had initial bunion surgery in Georgia in November, 2004. Afterward, she had chronic pain and could not put weight on her foot without a limp, making it impossible for her to resume her active lifestyle. Her doctor had said that the pain was caused by an incurable nerve problem not related to her surgery, but Pfeffer suspected a different problem. Using advanced tests performed at Cedars-Sinai, he confirmed that the nerves in her foot were normal, but that she needed another surgery to remove part of a bone that had become infected since the first surgery. After the second surgery (which included transplanting healthy bone harvested from her other foot), she was walking without pain within three months.

Pfeffer urges people who have chronic foot or ankle pain that interferes with their activities to seek a medical evaluation. “Particularly after a sports injury, millions of Americans will live with chronic pain symptoms. In fact, 20 percent of people who sprain their ankle will have chronic pain or inability to return to their previous activity level. That’s an indication that something is wrong that needs to be diagnosed and treated. No one should accept chronic foot or ankle pain as normal.”

(more)

Pfeffer added that if an injury goes untreated, it can often get worse. "One of the most common problems we see is ankle arthritis, which usually results from a previous injury," he said. "However, once the correct diagnosis is made, there are many new treatment options available, from minimally invasive cartilage restoration to total ankle joint replacement, which can be an excellent alternative to ankle fusion, which is the traditional treatment."

"Most foot and ankle problems can be helped without surgery, but if an operation is required, you want to go to a center that has a strong focus and expertise in foot and ankle surgeries," Pfeffer added.

Edwards doesn't hesitate to express her gratitude for Pfeffer's correct diagnosis and the foot surgery that followed and relieved her chronic pain. "This sounds extreme, but I honestly feel like Dr. Pfeffer gave me my life back. If I hadn't been able to do the things I like to do, it would have been a tremendous loss to me. I'm walking again now – not as fast as I was at one time – but I'll get there."

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The first of seven hospitals in California whose nurses have been honored with the prestigious Magnet designation, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center is one of the largest nonprofit academic medical centers in the Western United States. For 18 consecutive years, it has been named Los Angeles' most preferred hospital for all health needs in an independent survey of area residents. Cedars-Sinai is internationally renowned for its diagnostic and treatment capabilities and its broad spectrum of programs and services, as well as breakthroughs in biomedical research and superlative medical education. It ranks among the top 10 non-university hospitals in the nation for its research activities and is fully accredited by the Association for the Accreditation of Human Research Protection Programs, Inc. (AAHRPP). Additional information is available at www.cedars-sinai.edu.

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