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Spine Surgeon Leader to Know: Dr. Fred Sweet of Rockford Spine Center

Written by Bob Spoerl | April 05, 2012

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Fred Sweet, MD, is more than a spine surgeon at the Rockford Spine Center – he co-founded it in 2003, with the intention of creating a nationally recognized spine center in Rockford, Ill.

"Spine problems are complex, often involving multiple symptoms and affecting other parts of the body," Dr. Sweet says. "I wanted to create a state-of-the-art spine center where we can provide patients with ancillary services they need in one place to make an accurate diagnosis."

Dr. Sweet's been busy since becoming a board certified orthopedic surgeon more than 20 years ago. Perhaps at the top of his list of achievements: the development of a surgical technique to treat scoliosis and spinal deformities. He's among a small group of surgeons in the world who uses the technique. Dr. Sweet leverages his expertise of minimally invasive spinal surgery techniques and new surgical technologies as an orthopedic surgeon instructor at the University of Illinois College of Medicine at Rockford, a position he's held for more than a decade.

The Rockford surgeon's center has also made advancement in the area of cutting costs. In 2011, a team of researchers at the Rockford Spine Center found that administering a normal antibiotic to patients before surgery reduced infection rates from 3 percent to less than 0.1 percent. The technique could save millions of dollars annually.

Though Illinois is home, Dr. Sweet helps treat patients near and far. He served 16 years as a Navy Reservist, which included a tour of duty as a medical officer during the Gulf War. Dr. Sweet has taken his spinal treatment techniques to places where people can't afford basic healthcare, coordinating surgical care for children in third world countries through Childspring International, a faith-based medical charity. He also provides charitable care at the Walter Lawson's Children Home in Rockford.

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