

Katie Johnson: Good morning and welcome to Apple a Day, Lake Region Healthcare's health and wellness show, where we feature news and information you can use to live a healthier life. I am Katie Johnson, your host, and my guest today is Dr. James Ragland. He is the newest member of our medical staff, and we are so excited that he is bringing neurology to Lake Region Healthcare and to our patients. Good morning Dr. Ragland, welcome to Lake Region Healthcare and thank you for joining us.

Dr. Ragland: Thank you.

Katie Johnson: Well, I am as I said, so excited that you are going to be introducing neurology services to our community and to our patients. It's a brand new specialty that we will be offering here, and I'm anxious to talk to you more about what that means to people in our community. But first let's just introduce them to you a little bit further and get to know you. What has your medical career looked like up until joining us here at Lake Region Healthcare?

Dr. Ragland: Katie, that's an interesting question. I do not know how far you want me to go, but I will go as far as my birth certificate so to speak.

Katie Johnson: All right.

Dr. Ragland: All right, I was born in Nagercoil, which is a small town on the tip of southern part of India.

Katie Johnson: Okay.

Dr. Ragland: And surprisingly, I was born in a taxi. I was in a hurry, I was the fifth child. And my parents, especially my dad, was insistent as I grew that one of us should become a doctor. Actually I wanted to be a zoologist. I did undergraduate in zoology and I was in the graduate college. So anyways, I joined the Madras Medical College, which is the southern part of in India [inaudible 00:01:35] Madras. I did my undergraduate in medical school. It was a long duration type of medical school, about five and a half years. I was practicing after that for about seven years in India. To move on from there, and then so I took my exams, my ECFMG and they make me this visa qualifying exam and all that stuff.

And I jumped through the hoops and I landed in New York first. So once I got into the residency program in psychiatry at Warren State Hospital which is in Pennsylvania, it's a cold country, just like Minnesota or Fargo. Then I got the visa for my wife, Mercy and Andrew, my oldest son. And then I moved on to Albert Einstein school of Psychiatry. Psychiatry was not easy, so I want something more concrete. So, I joined neurology where I could see the CAT scan and the MRI scan. Did my residency in the oldest hospital in the United States called the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia.

I finished my training. I did my three months of rotation in India. The very last rotation, so then somebody from North Dakota, Bismarck, the late Dr. Arazi. He recruited to come to Bismarck, North Dakota. So, I worked for four years at CHI. That is St. Alexis Medicals in Bismarck. Then three of us split, and then we all started our own practice. So, I practice for about 25 years in one place in Bismarck. And then I thought it was time for me to move on.

Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Ragland: So from Bismarck, I did some work as a neurohospitalist, then came to Essentia Health for three years. And now here I am. I think this is the ideal place that I wanted to establish neurology in the outpatient setting. And Fergus Falls, Lake Region people were very gracious. They have accommodated me. Here I am. I think one moment in my life, this is the moment in my life I've been waiting for.

Katie Johnson: That's great to hear. You said we were very accommodating. What were the other factors that prompted you to say, "Lake Region Healthcare's the right place for me right now."?

Dr. Ragland: Well, I'm not a guy who wants to be living in big city, crowded cities. So, the size did not matter at all. It's 14,000 and I look at it. And then I was amazed to look at this about maybe \$30 million outpatient clinic, it was beautiful. It was just beautiful as you would see in New York City or Philadelphia. It was a lovely, it was done ... planned so well. So, that attracted me. And the people were so nice. I love this place.

Katie Johnson: As I mentioned, this is a brand new specialty at our clinic. So, I'd like to talk a little bit more about what a neurologist does.

Dr. Ragland: Yeah.

Katie Johnson: What are the conditions that a person would seek care from a neurologist for?

Dr. Ragland: The neurologist deals specifically with headache, for example migraine headaches or non-migrainous headaches. Epilepsy or seizure disorder, there are different types of seizure disorders. I don't want to go into details, but ... so it's a very complex subspecialty. Then I deal with neuromuscular diseases like myopathy or muscle diseases, and then multiple sclerosis. So, we have all of these branches. And neuroimaging, we look at the CAT scan of the head. MRI of the brain, try to diagnose accurately importantly. Many of the patient want to know what's wrong with them. They are not really so much concern about the disease, but they want to know what's really wrong?

Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Ragland: If you say that everything is good, they're satisfied. With something minor is wrong, then we just tell them, reassure them. Reassurance has been the main

thing. So, we need to comprehensively evaluate patients. It's not easy to evaluate neurological issues. Because it's not dermatology, we cannot see.

Katie Johnson: Right.

Dr. Ragland: Yeah, so the brain cannot be seen. It has to be imaged. And the examination, the history is the most important part.

Katie Johnson: Sure, sure, so you talked about this broad range of things that neurology covers. Are there things that are more common or that you more commonly see in your practice? Or perhaps things that are of particular interest to you professionally when it comes to neurology?

Dr. Ragland: Well, let me first stress upon the common disorders of neurological diseases. It's age-related. For example, the young female suffer from migraines quite often, more than men. And men have different types of headaches called cluster headaches, which is a horrendous, really bad headache. And that's not really common. But the common ones are neck pain and lower back pain, is very common at different ages. But older age groups have more of the neck pain, and the younger age group will have more of a low back pain.

For example, epilepsy can run in the gamut. You have epilepsy that seen in babies and children, and adults. That's a broad range. That's also very common. And multiple sclerosis unfortunately is more common in these colder climate areas, in the northern part of the United States. So, that is quite common. So, we tend to look into that in detail. And there are many mimics that resemble multiple sclerosis. That's one of the important things not to over-diagnose multiple sclerosis, but to be very careful. For that, you need to have vast experience, imaging studies, and the history taking. In neurology, history taking is important.

Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Ragland: So, we need to do that. And in the older population we have tremors, usually like Parkinson's disease. Or another one called the benign essential tremor, which is really not benign. It really comes in the way of when they eat or try to drink, they shake and then they spill fluids all over. So, it is very disconcerting to them. We need to treat them effectively. So then we have again the old age group, have memory issues, dementias.

Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Ragland: So, then we have to classify them and make sure that you don't over-diagnose it. And then give a wrong diagnosis like Alzheimer's when they don't have Alzheimer's. It can be age-related memory issues, which is not uncommon.

Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Ragland: We all lose some memory as we age, that's no big deal. Because as long as you have critical thinking and able to function, you're fine. So, those are the broad range of illnesses we see.

Katie Johnson: Sure, you talk about how important it is to take history from patients. And that makes me think of the importance of the relationship, and the trust between the provider and the patient. What is it about providing really exceptional patient care that's important to you?

Dr. Ragland: Well, some are born with certain qualities. And it's hard to inculcate that, unless you have it in you. For example, some doctors are very compassionate by nature. And that's a big asset. Some people are very patient, and some doctors are great listeners.

Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Ragland: So you need to have a combination of being a good listener and being compassionate, and treat a patient as another human being or one of your own relatives.

Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Ragland: And then what happens is they see in you. Because patients, you cannot fool a patient. They can see in you your facial expression, whether really you are a caring person or not. They make the impression. And then once they know that you care, they open up. In the second visit, they tell you the stories that they didn't want to tell are shared with you. In neurology, the patient tells the diagnosis. If only you care to listen. So this is one of the things that the neurologist should learn to listen, listen, and listen. This is a skill that you will learn, some people have a natural skill.

And I was told from my oldest brother that you are the most loving and compassionate guy. I do not know it's true or not, but I think my patients tell me that. So, that is a great reward for me. When patients tell me that, "You're really down to earth, easy to ... easily approachable." Many other colleagues tell me that, "You are very easily approachable." So are the nurses. They say, "We can always ask you a question and you are so friendly." And they can share with you things of that nature.

So, those are the qualities that you should have for a neurologist. Or for that matter, any physician. And naturally, then you care. Once they know you care-

Katie Johnson: Well, I've only known you for a few moments. But if our listeners could see your face, I think that comment you made about being able to see in your eyes if you're a compassionate person and if you care, it's certainly evident. How about when you're not working? What are your hobbies? What do you enjoy doing outside of medicine.

Dr. Ragland: Yeah, it's interesting. I am a little bit addicted to gym, gymnasium. I go to gym on a regular basis. I've done that during my college years. From age 17, I think. I was always thin and I wanted to put on some weight and muscle. And a compete interest, compete now in body building in India. Of course in body building, India, we are all small structured guys. It's not going to be big muscles. But I have pictures of, my images when I was doing my third year at medical school. I came second, twice in bodybuilding. Not big muscles, but real muscles, so I was addicted to exercise from that time onwards. I try to go at least four or five days.

And then I used to play chess a little bit, I played piano a little bit when I was younger. But torch is for my younger son, and then he got some trophies. I never got any, and so I'm proud of him. Apart from that, we travel a little bit. Now I got a big bucket list. That I got to travel, to go to Europe and see some places.

Katie Johnson: Nice.

Dr. Ragland: Apart from that, I don't have big hobbies like bungee jumping or cliff diving, or anything like that. Yeah, I kid. Maybe kayak. Maybe I might do it here?

Katie Johnson: Yeah, for sure.

Dr. Ragland: Yeah.

Katie Johnson: Yeah, we have beautiful lakes.

Dr. Ragland: Exactly.

Katie Johnson: That you can explore, and you'll be no stranger to the snow now that you've been in North Dakota for so long. So, finding some snow hobbies might be good too. Anything else you'd like our listeners to know about your practice or about neurology in general?

Dr. Ragland: One of the things that most, many of the patients have is a fear and anxiety. The best way to alleviate anxiety is to come and be reassured with a neurologist who cares. And you can be assured of one thing, I'll be a great listener. I'll listen to you, what your problems are. I'll do my best. I'm not going to say that I'm going to solve every one of your problem. But if I do not know anything, I'll redirect you to somebody who may have better experience. I hate to say this, there's always a guy who is smarter than me somewhere.

Katie Johnson: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. Ragland: But the most important thing is, in the best interest of the patient, I'll do everything possible for you.

Katie Johnson: That's wonderful. You are going to fit in very well here, Dr. Ragland. I am sure of that. We are so happy to welcome you to Lake Region Healthcare. And thank you for being willing to come here and build a neurology practice for our community, for our patients and for Lake region health care. We're looking forward to having you here as part of the team, and thanks for taking time to be with me this morning as well.

Dr. Ragland: Yeah, likewise, yeah, I enjoyed talking to you. You are a very personable individual yourself. And very welcoming people, I've not seen anybody who was ... not unwelcome me. It's a great place to work.

Katie Johnson: Wonderful, welcome to Lake Region Healthcare and to Fergus Falls, Dr. James Ragland. Neurologist and the newest member of our medal ... medical staff here at Lake Region Healthcare and my guest today on Apple a Day. Dr. Ragland and Katie Johnson remind you there is so much to do here. Stay healthy for it. Have a great day.