

Medical News

Better Nights, Better Days New England Sleep Center helps correct poor sleep

A good night's sleep could be as simple as the right mattress and good habits. Often, however, deep sleep is elusive because of a physical or medical condition. That was the case for Pam Steers of Weare, who went in for a sleep study at CMC's New England Sleep Center prior to having bariatric surgery.

"You go into the sleep center at the Holiday Inn and you meet a bunch of wonderful people," she says.

"Then you get in your jammies, they stick electrodes on you, and they put you to bed. The environment is comfortable, the bed is comfortable. It's a very soothing environment."

The team at the Sleep Center does try to create a soothing environment, but that alone won't solve the problem for most patients. "The goal is to get patients to relax so they can sleep," says Clinical Coordinator Dave Pinsonneault, "but by the time someone comes in for a sleep study, we've usually ruled out environmental factors. There's a medical reason for their tiredness."

According to the American Sleep Association, anywhere between 50 and 70 million Americans suffer from some kind of sleep disorder. CMC's



apnea, a condition in which the airway muscles relax to the point of cutting off a person's oxygen when they sleep. She started sleep therapy in December, 2016 with a CPAP machine and an oxygen concentrator and had her bariatric surgery six months later.

While she's got a ways to go, Pam is slowly but surely on her way to better health and rest. "I'm still learning about sleep," says Pam, adding, the

sleep study "is easy. It takes no time and I can't say enough good things about that program." ■■

New England Sleep Center now has two physicians, with pulmonologist Dr. Mark Pohlman joining Medical Director George Neal. Before going in for a sleep study, patients meet with one of them for a consult, complete with a full medical history, an interview of their sleep partner and a look at their bed-time habits.

"The vast majority of patients who come for a sleep study are diagnosed with sleep apnea," says Pinsonneault. "There are other conditions, too, that can impact a person's sleep, like limb movement or REM behavior disorders. Sometimes, there's more than one issue going on. We'll get to the bottom of it, though. It just may take some time."

Pam was, in fact, diagnosed with sleep