

## From the Editor's Desk

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Obesity has reached almost epidemic proportions in the United States and is the second leading cause of preventable death, behind cigarette smoking. Ochsner physicians and researchers have responded to this serious problem, and this edition of *The Ochsner Journal* is dedicated to our efforts.

Many medical problems are associated with obesity. Dr. Surya Artham and colleagues discuss how obesity-associated hypertension relates to heart disease and how weight loss affects outcomes. Dr. Richard Re's article shows how to treat obesity-related hypertension. Arthritis makes it difficult for obese patients to exercise, further exacerbating their problem. Dr. Deryk Jones explains how obesity affects joints and causes arthritis, and Dr. Matthew McQueen discusses how to safely start obese patients on exercise programs. Many patients are not able to lose weight on their own and have to resort to surgery. Dr.

Allison Snyder's article addresses the psychological assessment of the bariatric patient, including anxiety, depression, and eating disorders. Sleep apnea is a common problem associated with obesity, and Dr. Ronald Amedee and colleagues discuss how bariatric surgery improves this condition. For best results, long-term follow-up by a bariatric specialist after bariatric surgery is necessary, a topic presented here by the Ochsner's Surgical Weight Loss Program.

Additionally, we have included articles on developing an Internet presence for medical practices by Catherine Maley and Dr. Neil Baum; the career of Dr. Champ Lyon, a preeminent American and Ochsner surgeon by Dr. Michael Trotter; a book review for the new edition of *Pediatric Surgery* by Dr. David Beck, *The Ochsner Journal's* editor-in-chief; and an evaluation of the activities of the new transfer center by Michael Hulefeld.