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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Quincy, CA, November 9, 2011 – “If your wife says you have it, you do,” Dr. Ross Morgan explained to about 50 listeners, during his presentation entitled ‘*Sawing logs or ticking time bomb?*’ at the second Dinner with a Doctor event at the Mineral Building in Quincy last Wednesday night, November 9th.

Often unaware that they even have a problem, a staggering number of Americans are estimated to suffer from the chronic medical condition obstructive sleep apnea (OSA); roughly 18 million according to Morgan, which is not much less than the number of Americans estimated to suffer from diabetes.

OSA is caused by a blockage of the airway during sleep from relaxed throat muscles, a low-lying soft palate or a relaxed tongue. Individuals experience a temporary suspension or reduction of breathing for 10 or more seconds. Some individuals have been documented to experience these airflow interruptions as often as 100 times per night.

“Sleep is a complex process,” Morgan went on to explain. “OSA affects the deepest restorative stages of sleep. Sleep deprivation is bad; so bad in fact; it’s been used as a form of torture.”

Morgan explained that individuals with other chronic health disorders frequently suffer from OSA - one half of those diagnosed with diabetes, depression or congestive heart failure also has OSA. OSA also increases the risk of stroke by 2 times, fatal cardiovascular events by 5 times and being involved in an automobile accident by 15 times.

Common signs of OSA include loud or disruptive snoring, gasping or choking during sleep, restless sleep, loss of energy, excessive daytime sleepiness, morning headaches, dry or sore throat, depression, irritability or difficulty concentrating, high blood pressure and weight gain.

The adage ‘sawing logs’ may imply that loud snoring is masculine – a man’s problem - but women can suffer from OSA as well. The risk of OSA increases in both genders with age and is very common in women over the age of 65. Several other factors increase the risk of OSA including being overweight, being over 40 years of age, having a neck size 17 or greater, smoking, excessive alcohol use or being African American or Hispanic.

“Once diagnosed OSA can be treated easily,” Morgan reassured the crowd. “Treatment improves quality of life almost immediately,” he went on. Home sleep

tests are commonly used to diagnose OSA. After being prescribed a home sleep test, an individual will receive a small bedside console with three small sensors. The sensors are worn for three consecutive nights and measure breathing efforts, blood oxygen, heart activity, snoring and airflow (direct nasal & oral). The data is recorded and stored in the bedside console, then returned to the doctor for interpretation.

Treatment options range from lifestyle changes for very mild OSA to use of a special continuous positive airway pressure (CPAP) machine to surgery for the most severe cases. Studies have documented that CPAP treatment results in significant reductions in hospital costs and physician claims and improves quality of life as soon as the first year following treatment.

“Take a moment to answer these four questions: Do you snore loudly? Do you often feel tired or sleepy during the day? Has anyone observed you stop breathing during your sleep? Do you have high blood pressure? If you answer yes to two or more of these questions, you are at risk for OSA.” Morgan summed up the presentation, “If you don’t do it for your life, do it for your wife.” For more information about obstructive sleep apnea please contact Dr. Ross Morgan at 283-5640.

Dinner with a Doctor is a semi-annual community education forum sponsored by Plumas District Hospital. The price of admission included a healthy dinner prepared by Caron Chance of Back Door Catering Co. Phyllis Golla, Wayne Leiss, Fred Surber and Dale Thomas were the lucky recipients of several door prizes. The small venue allowed Dr. Morgan to take questions from the audience and display actual home sleep test equipment and a CPAP machine.