

2008 Showcase in Excellence Award Recipient

Verde Valley Medical Center “Joint Replacement Program”



Company Information:

Highest Ranking Official:

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Interim VVMC President

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Type of work:

The Verde Valley Joint Replacement Program (VV JRP) is a specialty orthopedic unit within VVMC, utilizing a wellness philosophy and program components that promote safe, fast recovery from joint replacement surgery. Verde Valley Medical Center (VVMC), a member of Northern Arizona Healthcare, is a full-service nonprofit hospital with 99 acute care beds, and 11 behavioral health beds.

Workforce: Hospital 849

Testimonial of Value of Arizona State Quality Awards Program

"Verde Valley Medical Center is honored to have been selected as a recipient of the 2008 Showcase in Excellence. This award recognizes our continual focus on providing the highest quality care and has reinforced our quest for excellence. Participation in this program can be a transforming and motivating experience for any Arizona company striving to be the best."

-Jack Dempsey, Interim VVMC President

Highlights of Organizational Process:

Quality and Performance Results:

- VV JRP therapy patients begin outpatient rehabilitation 20.9 days sooner than patients receiving home health therapy before they begin outpatient treatment.
- VV JRP patients met therapy goals 16.6 days sooner when starting outpatient therapy directly.
- Patients complete physical therapy within about 6 weeks compared to about 9 weeks for patients receiving home health care.
- VV JRP physical therapy model savings is greater than \$800 per patient.
- The Knee Injury and Osteoarthritis Outcomes Score (KOOS) questionnaire measuring patient's pain, symptoms, activities of daily living and quality of life. Patient results at therapy discharge and at 6-12 month (av.) consistently demonstrate significant improvement in all categories compared to their pre-surgery baseline.
- The six-minute walk test (6MWT), measures lower extremity function for patients compared against that of a healthy control group. VV JRP patients' pre-surgery baseline results were 65.8%, (av.) with an improvement to 95.5% (av.) at the 6-12 month follow up.
- Knee extension and flexion results showed improved function for patients discharged to outpatient physical therapy when compared to discharge to home health physical therapy.

- Medicare bases reimbursement on a lump sum payment known as Diagnosis-related Group (DRG). A loss of revenue related to Medicare DRG for JRP patients was reduced to \$10,408 from a high of \$82,841 by the discharge of patients directly to outpatient physical therapy. Likewise, the volume of patients discharged to outpatient physical therapy rose to 48% in 2007 from 7.1% in 2005.
- VV JRP has noted steady trends in volume growth: 3% between 2005-2006, 8% during 2006-2007, and a 4% projected increase 2007-2008. VV JRP has experienced an estimated 14% overall increased inpatient volume since 2005.

Processes

- To focus on the future, the VV JRP team utilizes a Strategic Planning Process and meets regularly with Senior Leadership and Board of Directors to review progress of the strategic plan. Opportunities to evaluate and improve the process occur regularly in a variety of formats such as departmental and operational review meetings. Community outreach presentations, hospital newsletter, email, and open-forum organizational meetings are available to share information across the organization.
- Significant changes have been implemented to the VV JRP since its earlier (2001) model. Review of 2005 - 2006 data of patients discharged to home health therapy revealed patients had decreased range of motion, required more therapy and longer recovery time to achieve their goals. In 2006, the VV JRP Medical Director implemented highly innovative improvements to joint replacement surgery which included a smaller incision, a three-tier comprehensive pain management strategy, and physical therapy and ambulation within two-four hours after surgery. The VV JRP Rehabilitation team added a comprehensive inpatient care “pathway” for discharge to outpatient therapy.
- VV JRP partnered with Northern Arizona University (NAU) to further develop an outcome study for publication. The tracking of patient outcomes data research study also served to further support VVMC mission and VV JRP goal of improving patients’ health and quality of life
- The standard rehabilitation industry measures of patient perceived value, satisfaction, and success include mobility, function, and quality of life. With focus on results, rapid recovery, return to normal activity, increased mobility with fewer therapy visits, and overall better quality of life, KOOS and 6MWT provide tangible value for patients of the VV JRP.
- The VV JRP team stays abreast of current patient care trends through national conferences, industry literature, and reviewing actual patient outcome data.
- Efficient use of hospital resources is demonstrated with VV JRP operating room scheduling, vendor agreements, patient and family education, comprehensive patient care pathway model, accelerated group rehabilitation regimens, and discharge directly to outpatient physical therapy.
- Prevention of rework and defects is accomplished by the VV JRP patient care pathway, multidisciplinary approach, specially trained nursing staff, communication and documentation with patient, family, and physicians regarding patient status. Rehabilitation follow-up for up to one year promotes continuity of care.
- Feedback from patients and team members led to VV JRP improvements by adjusting physical therapy regimens, nursing team empowerment, and patients achieving therapy goals. Feedback from surgery personnel, physicians, suppliers, and the patient support system is received informally. Former patients may serve as experienced representatives at public VV JRP seminars in our service areas and provide feedback to prospective patients during the education class.