

REVISITING AGS COCARE: ORTHO™ —HOW AN INTERDISCIPLINARY PROGRAM HAS IMPROVED CARE FOR THOUSANDS OF OLDER ADULTS WITH HIP FRACTURES

In 2018, we reported on the launch of AGS CoCare: Ortho™, a unique AGS program designed to provide high-quality, person-centered care to the more than 300,000 older people hospitalized annually for hip fractures.

Supported by The John A. Hartford Foundation, AGS CoCare: Ortho™ is a geriatrics-orthopedics co-management model in which geriatrics professionals or specially trained geriatrics co-managers work with orthopedic surgeons to coordinate and improve the perioperative care of older adults with hip fractures. The co-manager addresses a host of risk factors for harmful events, from delirium and falls to adverse drug reactions and infections during a hospital stay.

That special attention—and deep collaboration—mean patients and entire health systems can realize a myriad of benefits, including:

- Shorter time to surgery
- Reduced length of stay
- Reduced 30-day re-hospitalization
- Reduced complications and enhanced function after patients return home
- Fewer patients requiring ICU admissions
- Fewer post-operative infections, including urinary tract infections and pneumonia
- Near elimination of restraint use and episodes of delirium
- Reduced in-patient mortality
- Increased proportion of patients discharged home
- Institutional cost savings

AGS News sat down with leaders from several institutions and health systems that adopted AGS CoCare: Ortho™ since its launch. Among those leaders are Liron Sinvani, MD, Director, Geriatric Hospitalist Service,

at the Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell in Manhasset, NY. Dr. Sinvani helped oversee the implementation of AGS CoCare: Ortho™ at four very different Northwell hospitals: one tertiary facility, two large community hospitals, and one smaller community facility.

“The most direct benefit of adopting the AGS CoCare: Ortho™ program is that every patient, no matter who their orthopedic surgeon, resident, or medical doctor may be, is getting the same evidence-based care. We have standardized care for patients throughout all the implementation sites,” says Dr. Sinvani.

She notes that before the launch of AGS CoCare: Ortho™, patient care depended on the surgeon or hospital, and outcomes varied as a result. “We now see how standardized order sets, progress notes, and education allow us to provide standardized, high-quality care,” notes Dr. Sinvani.

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Dr. Sinvani and Northwell also aren't alone. Several other institutions across the U.S. have implemented AGS CoCare: Ortho™. Here's a look at progress made by AGS CoCare: Ortho™ sites of all shapes and sizes.

Northwell Health (Long Island, NY): Creating a Platform for Success Has Significant Benefits

Northwell Health became a pilot site for AGS CoCare: Ortho™ in 2017. To

prepare, their leaders worked closely and extensively with AGS CoCare: Ortho™ experts, a key to success made possible thanks to the program's broad collaborative offerings (which include coaching calls and implementation resources).

Northwell Health's first programs launched at Long Island Jewish Medical Center in early 2018 and Long Island Jewish Valley Stream later that year. Since then, they also have established sites at Huntington Hospital and Long Island Jewish Forest Hills, which just launched in December 2019.

At Long Island Jewish Medical Center, AGS CoCare: Ortho™ has enabled teams to increase the rate of admitting patients to the operating room within 48 hours from 75% to 83%, with order-set usage up to 91%, too. Patients' pain scores have decreased and their mortality in the hospital has gone down, as has length of stay. Team members at Northwell

Health Long Island Jewish Medical Center cite the use of the program's standardized order-set templates as one of the most valuable contributors to these and other successes.

Team members at Long Island Jewish Valley Stream note that the hospital is connected to a skilled nursing facility, which can follow patients after discharge in order to assess and then improve post-acute outcomes. They note that AGS CoCare: Ortho™



has improved teamwork in that arena, too. Shared goals have led to better processes and patient outcomes. As a result, readmission rates and lengths of stay have decreased, team members say.

Strong Memorial Hospital (University of Rochester; Rochester, NY): Early Adopter Notes Successes

When the AGS CoCare: Ortho™ program launched at Strong Memorial Hospital in 2017, team members described it as a “fully integrated team with great participation.” They noted that the program enabled the team to begin meeting key goals: Getting patients to the operating room within 24 hours of arrival, reducing the use of and removing urinary catheters on a timely basis, improving weight bearing after a fracture had been stabilized, and reducing patients’ lengths of stay. As the team worked toward accomplishing these goals, they appreciated AGS CoCare: Ortho™’s implementation toolkit, which provided templates for notes, order sets, data, and scorecards so staff didn’t have to “reinvent the wheel.”

In June 2019, Strong Memorial Hospital received Joint Commission certification, a marker of the hospital’s reputation and ranking. Team members said that AGS CoCare: Ortho™ played a role in this success by allowing them to meet the goal of timely catheter removal and improving weight bearing after fracture stabilization.

“The program’s Educational Modules are a great starting point for developing our own material—we are constantly referring to them and referencing them,” said Jenny Shen, MD, Assistant Professor, Department

of Medicine, who helps lead the AGS CoCare: Ortho™ program in Rochester.

Dr. Shen noted that since the program launched, orthopedic patients have been getting better care with improved safety, especially for frail older individuals.

Baystate Health (Springfield, MA) and Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond, VA): New Adopters Already Seeing Results

Baystate Health launched AGS CoCare: Ortho™ in April 2019 and quickly saw success. They developed an interdisciplinary team that included an active pharmacist and support from Baystate’s decision-analysis group. As a result, said team members, prescribing for older orthopedic patients improved. Now, team members are using the AGS CoCare: Ortho™ online community to develop ideas and to get questions answered.

Baystate also isn’t alone on the East Coast in observing early success. At Virginia Commonwealth University, which launched AGS CoCare: Ortho™ in June 2019, team members have already noted that time to the operating room has improved and lengths of stay have been reduced.

Meeting Challenges Head-On

As a veteran of four AGS CoCare: Ortho™ program launches, Dr. Sinvani notes that a key challenge was figuring

out how to engage frontline professionals at each site. “Not every site had the same needs. It was important for us to communicate with each site frequently and understand the driving forces/culture in order to create an implementation plan,” she said.

“Secondly, it was difficult trying to educate the interdisciplinary team. We found hospitalist training to be the most efficient, but in order to educate nurses and surgeons, we needed to come up with creative platforms like an e-newsletter that highlighted a topic and engaged the team through small huddles or grand rounds,” Dr. Sinvani shared.

With implementation now complete at four Northwell facilities, “We’re getting ready to launch the program at additional sites and are using the scorecard we developed to assess site readiness and potential for success,” says Dr. Sinvani. ♦

Interested in learning more about AGS CoCare: Ortho™ and building your own success story?

Contact Deena Sandos, LMSW, AGS Manager of Special Projects, at DSandos@americangeriatrics.org.