



How Northwell Leveraged Software and Services to Achieve Growing List of Advanced Certification Sites



About Northwell Health

As the largest integrated delivery network in New York, Northwell Health consists of 23 hospitals and serves more than 2 million patients annually. Known for its dedication to innovative patient care, Northwell achieved top-50 national rankings from *U.S. News & World Report* in 32 medical specialties in 2018 – including orthopedics. Their orthopedics division, routinely recognized as a Center of Excellence delivering better outcomes at a lower cost, includes over 250 surgeons across 15 hospitals specializing in joint, spine and sports surgery and recovery.

Since 2016, Northwell has worked with Force Therapeutics to see six of its hospitals achieve Advanced Certification for Total Hip and Total Knee Replacement (THKR) from The Joint Commission (TJC). The Advanced Certification recognizes hospitals with demonstrated commitment to a standardized framework for improving patient outcomes and experience. Acting as the industry's "seal of approval", the accreditation typically fast tracks a system's marketability to commercial payers as well as large self-insured employers. As of November 1, 2019, there are only 115 hospitals across the country who have received Advanced Certification for THKR.

Overview of Advanced Certification Process

Overall success in achieving Advanced Certification requires transparency into a standardized patient experience across preoperative, intraoperative and postoperative care (via an intensive two-day site visit), and the ability to demonstrate positive outcomes for the following metrics:

- Regional anesthesia
- PROMs completion
- % Ambulation DOS
- AJRR registry participation
- % Discharge home
- Patient selection criteria for same day discharge (for ASCs)

Northwell's interdisciplinary team met regularly to define processes for precise tracking of the above metrics. Additionally, the team collaborated to establish their own hospital-selected metrics to consistently report on to demonstrate their commitment to a higher standard of clinical service.

Key Challenges

One of the biggest challenges most health systems face as they enter the process is how to efficiently collect and report on the required data elements, as well as their own self-selected hospital performance metrics.

While hospital administration typically owns tracking for metrics at the point of care and during the inpatient stay, pre- and post-op PROMs collection and submission to AJRR require a different approach. Paper or tablet-based methods have been effective for many systems for patient-reported data collection during in-person pre-op appointments or joint classes, however post-op PROMs collection involves a significant amount of supplemental staff time and coordination. Additionally, the collection rates at post-op intervals become extremely inconsistent as patient visits and staff available to administer the surveys can vary.

From reporting on internal performance metrics, to collecting PROMs and submitting monthly AJRR registry feeds (required for TJC Advanced Certification as of July, 2019), Northwell needed an automated system that could work for them “behind the scenes” and aggregate each hospital’s unique data sets into the requisite formatting.



↓ 16%

Reduced hospital length of stay

13X

Increased (PROMs) collection

↓ 17%

Reduced SNF utilization

The Solution

From 2016 to 2019, Northwell implemented Force's episodic care platform and consultative services across nine hospitals and three orthopedic subspecialties. By 2019, six of those hospitals earned Advanced Certification for THKR, with applications planned for additional hospitals in 2020. Force's combination of comprehensive technology and certification reporting expertise allowed Northwell to achieve success, without additional staffing, via the following key strategies:



Outsourcing processes and execution to industry experts

- Force worked closely with each hospital from implementation through execution to align project goals with Northwell's strategic vision. They customized the platform to meet TJC requirements, helped guide discussions for change management, and delegated Force experts to help execute on KPIs for continuous improvement.
- To ensure successful patient adoption, Force created multi-modal processes such as automated text and email as well as phone support to intelligently engage every patient and guide them through questions if needed.



Standardized care through a seamless virtual experience

- Northwell established the Joint Preservation and Restoration Program, a team of over 20 leaders and highly engaged surgeons, to use Force to help drive institutional standardization and best practices across the system.
- Digitized workflows and messaging allowed providers to coordinate care with every member of the care team across the entire episode.
- Video-based joint class re-education and digitized instructions available 24/7 empowered patients with information to help prepare for their procedure and set expectations for recovery at home.
- Patients were able to send wound photos and ADL video updates to their provider and care team in real-time. A recent study* proved that remote monitoring of surgical incision sites through Force added transparency into patient recovery in the home and reduced unnecessary readmissions.



Increased efficiencies with an automated approach to demonstrating and reporting outcomes

- Force's patient-friendly program drove strong adoption across all age demographics, leading to powerful PROMs collection, one of the key metrics required for Advanced Certification. Automated data collection allowed Northwell to achieve higher collection rates while decreasing responder and staff burden.
- As an approved vendor of AJRR, Force supplied Northwell with level III data and readied it for shipment at monthly intervals. Without Force, this process would have required hours of staff time compiling paper forms and transferring data to spreadsheets for scoring and submission.
- Force included PROMs within PDF Case Summaries that were shipped seamlessly to Northwell to upload into their EMR so all results lived within the patient record. This reduced manual workload and helped ensure capture of all key metrics.

"Our partnership with Force has been instrumental in helping our large health system of 13 joint programs provide robust, up-to-date patient and caregiver education. Additionally, the technology allows us to easily stay connected with our patients throughout their 90-day episode of care and recovery."

– Alanna Carcich, Director, Joints & Spine, Orthopaedic Service Line, Northwell Health

*Zhang J, Dushaj K, Rasquinha VJ, Scuderi GR, Hepinstall MS. Monitoring Surgical Incision Sites in Orthopedic Patients Using an Online Physician-Patient Messaging Platform. J Arthroplasty. 2019;34(9):1897-1900.