

# New clinical pathway delivers improved hip fracture care

Sentara Healthcare partners with Vizient to streamline care for 1,500 hip fracture patients across 12 hospitals annually.



With the number of hip fracture cases projected to rise by two to three times by 2050, Sentara Healthcare knew it was time to take a close look at the organization's pathway of care. Each year, Sentara serves approximately 1,500 hip fracture patients across their 12-hospital system.

## A new clinical pathway

Since hip fracture care involves a number of areas within Sentara—from the emergency department to physician clinics to physical therapy—it was vital to gain support across many departments to create sustainable change. Working with consultants at Vizient, Sentara tracked patients across multiple sites to map processes and gain insight into the patient journey. The team conducted interviews of key stakeholders at all 12 hospitals to identify perceived strengths and weaknesses, and also created a multidisciplinary workgroup to provide oversight.

## SURPRISING FACTS

Every hour of every day in the U.S., about 30 women and 10 men [sustain a hip fracture](#).

One-year mortality after hip fracture is about 30%, which makes hip fractures [deadlier than heart attacks](#), strokes or heart failure.

A delay of just 48 hours in surgical treatment [quadruples complication rates](#), decreases return to independent living by 50% and doubles one-year mortality rates.

CASE STUDY

Sentara Healthcare



The case study resulted in a new clinical pathway for Sentara Healthcare with four primary goals:

- Get the patient into surgery as quickly as possible
- Focus on early mobility and ambulation
- Reduce dependence on opioids
- Discharge patients to the appropriate care setting

“Vizient delivered the clinical expertise and synthesized literature to support the proposed pathway, says Tyler Bennett, MHA, system director, orthopedic service line, for Sentara.

“They provided recommendations along the way, based on what had worked at other organizations, which contributed to our successful implementation at Sentara.”

From better patient assessments at the beginning of care to comprehensive transition planning, the new clinical pathway has improved the coordination and quality of care provided to geriatric patients with low energy hip fractures. Key drivers of the clinical pathway include regular data review with providers, ongoing engagement with care management, standardized pre/post order sets and a staff mindset of continuous improvement.

Key Results

1 Length of stay ratio

Q4 2018 1.09  
Q1 2021 **1.01**



2 Discharge to home rate

Q4 2018 19.71%  
Q1 2021 **28.84%**



3 Complication ratio

Q4 2018 0.62  
Q1 2021 **0.62**



4 Mortality ratio

Q4 2018 1.03  
Q1 2021 **0.81**



5 Urinary tract infection rate

Q4 2018 5.35%  
Q1 2021 **2.36%**



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“From the onset, we were able to involve the right people with the right information to move our project goals forward. Ensuring clinical support from every department delivering care to hip fracture patients was critical to our success.”

The 2021 results were achieved at a time of staffing shortages created by the COVID-19 pandemic. As staffing levels return to normal and the new clinical pathway becomes more ingrained at the hospital, these numbers should improve even further.

**Major takeaway**

By placing a higher priority on hip fracture patients—accelerating speed to surgery and beginning discharge planning as soon as possible—patient outcomes and hospital flow can be significantly improved.



—Tyler Bennett, MHA  
System Director,  
Orthopedic Service Line  
Sentara Healthcare



**About Sentara Healthcare**

Sentara Healthcare is a not-for-profit health system serving Virginia and North Carolina through 12 hospitals, outpatient care centers, imaging centers and more. Founded in 1888, Sentara has become a national leader in healthcare by maintaining high levels of service and innovation.

**CASE STUDY**

Sentara Healthcare



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