

Having Both Knees Replaced with *QualityPath* Delivers 'Best of Both Worlds'

Bob Reichling often walks five miles a day in his job at the Lands' End Dodgeville campus. Before both knees were replaced through *QualityPath* in 2016, every step hurt.

Bob's knees were damaged by a combination of sports injuries and osteoarthritis. Arthroscopic surgery and other treatments temporarily reduced the pain, but it gradually got "worse and worse," Bob said.

It was difficult to straighten his legs and once he was upright his right leg often locked in place. That meant walking, kneeling or climbing a ladder - all a regular part of his job - were a constant struggle. His hobbies of hunting, snowmobiling and riding a motorcycle brought pain as well.

"Everything hurt, so none of it was fun anymore," Bob said.

Learning About '*QualityPath*'

So he listened closely at the insurance enrollment meeting where Lands' Ends human resources speakers talked about a new program called *QualityPath*.

QualityPath patients pay less out-of-pocket - sometimes nothing, as in Bob's case - for knee replacements, total hip replacements and heart bypass surgery when they choose top doctors and hospitals. A similar program is available for CT and MRI tests.

Bob switched to a health plan that uses The Alliance network to connect people to doctors, hospitals and other health services.

He chose to get care from Monroe Clinic and Dr. Lance Sathoff on the recommendation of friends. Knowing that his surgeon and hospital met *QualityPath* standards was a bonus.

"It was the best of both worlds," said Bob, who lives in Darlington.

'Excellent' Care

Dr. Sathoff performed the surgery to replace Bob's right knee in February 2016. Bob praised Dr. Sathoff and the Monroe Clinic care team as "excellent."

Therapy and exercise helped Bob have a great outcome with lasting relief from pain. Before surgery, Bob attended a special class at Monroe Clinic and faithfully did the recommended exercises.

After surgery, he went to physical therapy and continued exercising at home. His favorite activity was riding a recumbent exercise bike, where he worked to regain strength without pain.

Yet as spring moved into summer, his left knee was still painful and getting worse. Working again with Dr. Sathoff and Monroe Clinic, Bob decided to have his left knee replaced in August 2016.



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Doing ‘Whatever I Want to Do Now’

With his second knee replacement, Bob used the online Guided CarePath tool to learn what to expect each week. The Guided CarePath is built into *QualityPath* to help educate patients, but a miscommunication meant Bob did not learn about it until the August surgery.

“That’s a really valuable tool,” Bob said. “I got information to read every week and steps to follow before the surgery and after. I didn’t get it all at once so it didn’t overwhelm me.”

He also got advice and assistance from Registered Nurse Margie Czechowicz, who is the *QualityPath* patient experience manager.

A 26-year Lands’ End employee, Bob returned to his regular duties at work roughly six weeks after surgery. Through occupational therapy, Bob had already learned to make small adjustments to accommodate his new knees, like using gel-filled kneepads when kneeling.

“But basically, there’s nothing I can’t do,” he said. “I’m doing whatever I want to do now.”

The final step in Bob’s return to the activities he loves was making his annual trip to the cabin that his father and friends built north of Hayward. In November 2016, he was able to walk through the woods while hunting with relatives and friends.

And this time, taking those steps didn’t hurt.



Health care made simple.