

QualityPath Patient Receives Top-Notch Care for Knee Replacement

Patty Stalheim was stopped in her tracks by knee pain. Then her left knee was replaced through *QualityPath* by Dr. Michael D.C. Lamson at Sauk Prairie Hospital in the summer of 2016.

Now she's mobile and active again. And she can skip seeing the doctor for her knee for three years, caregivers say.

Who is Patty?

Patty is a hard-working employee of Trek Bicycle Corporation. She worked in domestic sales and international sales for more than 25 years before a recent switch to consulting and customer service for Trek's international distributors and retailers.



When she's not working, you can find Patty chasing her two-year-old granddaughter, gardening, caring for her yard, snowshoeing, snowmobiling or just taking her daily walk of three to four miles.

Before Patty's knee replacement, all these things were difficult due to knee pain. Seeking relief, she visited three surgeons over a two-year period. She wanted to lose weight, but exercising was difficult when her knee gave out. She tried wearing a hinge brace but it was uncomfortable and ugly.

"It was time," Patty said.

Finding out About QualityPath

Patty's daughter works in health care and frequently visits Sauk Prairie Hospital. Based on her daughter's recommendation, Patty selected Dr. Lamson and Sauk Prairie but was unsure how insurance and *QualityPath* would cover the surgery.

So she called The Alliance to speak with Registered Nurse Margie Czechowicz, the *QualityPath* patient experience manager. Margie enrolls patients in the *QualityPath* program for knee replacement, total hip replacement or heart bypass surgeries.

Margie gave Patty good news; Sauk Prairie Hospital and Dr. Lamson are both part of the *QualityPath* program. That meant Patty could have surgery from Dr. Lamson and Sauk Prairie at an out-of-pocket cost of \$0. It was a "no-brainer" said Patty. In fact, her husband asked, "What are you waiting for?"

**“ It was a
'no-brainer' ”**

Margie made all of Patty's appointments, including in-home health care and physical therapy. Patty jokes that "Margie did everything for me except have the surgery." She took care of all the small details Patty wouldn't have thought to do.

Preparing for Surgery

During the weeks just before surgery, Patty became nervous and scared about the surgery and the resulting pain. Friends' horror stories about infections increased her worries.

Her fears were put in perspective with information from Margie and the Guided CarePath tool offered by The Alliance and Sauk Prairie Hospital. Patty learned how to prepare for surgery, including exercises to strengthen the muscles that support the knee.

"You have to work a lot on your quads so the rest of the leg is strong," said Patty.

She shared Guided CarePath lessons with her husband, who became her sole caregiver at home after surgery. The step-by-step instructions helped them prepare, which made everything easier and less painful for both of them. So did Patty's positive attitude, high spirits and hard work before and after surgery.

Sunflowers and Recovery

Patty has only good things to say about Sauk Prairie Hospital and Dr. Lamson. Patty appreciated Dr. Lamson's willingness to take time to explain everything to her and her husband. Having surgery in the summer was a bonus, since she could see the lovely sunflowers in the field outside the hospital.



During her six weeks of recovery, Patty focused on caring for her health and exercising, including physical therapy appointments. Margie often showed up to check her progress and offer encouragement.

Now back to work, Patty has paid nothing out-of-pocket for her procedure. She almost had the expense of renting a walker and cane, but then learned she could check them out for free from the local senior center.

"Call Margie"

Patty recommends *QualityPath* to co-workers, including a colleague who may need a hip replacement. Her advice is simple: "Call Margie." For Patty, that was the best route to get moving again.



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