

Wellbe Connects Patients to Measurably Better Care at CHI St. Alexius

How Wellbe's Connected Care solution helped an acute medical center keep patients engaged throughout the entire episode of care while exceeding performance targets for bundled payments



"Wellbe has made us more efficient at providing care across the board. Since bringing it live, we've seen lower reoperation rates, shorter lengths of stay, readmission rates well below the national average, and fewer patients in secondary nursing facilities. One hundred percent of our patients went home last month."

Dr. Timothy Bopp | Orthopaedic Surgeon & Chief of Staff



Wellbe & CHI St. Alexius at a Glance

Under the Medicare Comprehensive Care for Joint Replacement (CJR) bundled payment program, Dr. Timothy Bopp and his team at the Bone & Joint Center and CHI St. Alexius Medical Center used Wellbe *Connected Care* to deliver more efficient, higher quality care for a wide network of patients while controlling costs. Their new approach helped reduce expenses, increase quality, improve operational results, and reduce burdens on patients and their families.

- Reduced length of stay for THA to 1.25 and for TKA to 1.2, exceeding their 1.3 days target
- Increased discharge to home for THA to 98% and for TKA to 99.5%, exceeding their 95% target
- Decreased readmissions for THA to 2% and for TKA to 1.9%, exceeding their 5% target
- Increased PROMs completion rate up to 100%
- Improved patient satisfaction; 99% of patients say they would have another surgery at the facility

New expectations for quality bring difficult challenges for care

The introduction of the CJR bundled payment program presents challenges for providers to coordinate patient care across the entire episode.

For Dr. Timothy Bopp and his team at the Bone & Joint Center and CHI St. Alexius Medical Center, these challenges were further complicated by the many miles that separate roughly half of their patients from the specialists they need—a problem that forced difficult decisions upon patients and their families regarding how and where to seek the care they need.



“Half of our patients drive at least several hours to see us, so it’s not always convenient for them to come back to us [for follow-up]. It’s a lot easier for them to just go and see their regular doctor.”

Dr. Timothy Bopp

Despite the success of a solid preoperative program, Dr. Bopp and his team uncovered significant gaps in areas that directly impacted patient outcomes and were central to the key quality metrics related to the CJR bundle. Specifically, the team lacked a system capable of effectively standardizing care plans, educating patients, collecting patient-reported outcomes, and conducting post-operative follow-up to ensure the best possible results.

As a result, worrying trends developed. The difficult task of coordinating care for a mix of nearby and long-distance patients without a way to provide easy and convenient access to information and instructions was leading to costly cancellations, excessive lengths of stay, unnecessary skilled nursing facility utilization, and avoidable readmissions due to inconsistent post-acute treatments patients received from primary care physicians and emergency rooms.

Some issues, such as patient education, were more subtle, but no less critical. In an attempt to deliver vital care information while reducing the burden of travel, especially for patients living farther away, fewer, longer class sessions left patients overwhelmed with too much information at once. The team needed a system sophisticated enough to set expectations and provide crucial instructions in the way people actually retain and use what they learn, when and where it’s most convenient for them.

While CJR added financial pressure to these problems, Dr. Bopp and his team realized the solution they needed had to address an even more basic, yet equally critical need underlying it all: meeting the changing expectations of today’s *patients*.



“I appreciated all the information and suggestions. [Using the CarePath] makes the anticipation of upcoming surgery and recovery much easier, and helps ease any worries or concerns that a patient can experience.”

St. Alexius patient

Patients are no longer satisfied being passive players throughout their episodes of care. They expect the ease and convenience of using the same connected devices empowering them in other dimensions of life to become *active* partners in their healthcare.

The team set out to find a solution that could reliably track and manage patients throughout their entire episode of care while offering a patient-friendly interface that not only gathered and reported vital patient feedback, but actually *encouraged* patients to offer it in the first place—all while controlling costs and improving operational efficiency across the organization.

Wellbe *Connected Care* bridges the gap between patients and providers

Seeing a clear match between needs and capabilities, Dr. Bopp and his team found the solution in Wellbe *Connected Care*, a cloud-based platform whose combined capabilities work to solve the most important problem at the root of it all—relieving patients and their families of uncertainty (and the risks that creates for cancellations and readmissions) by setting clear expectations and empowering them with easy and convenient access to information and instructions throughout the entire episode.



“Patients tell me that they find the information is delivered in easy-to-understand increments and gives them a better idea of what to expect before and after a procedure.”

Dr. Timothy Bopp

Regardless of how far away they live, *Connected Care* enables St. Alexius joint replacement patients to actively engage in a care plan that makes it easy and convenient for them wherever they are. Patients and their families receive automated notifications, access and follow their care plan (*CarePath*) on any device, and interact with information and instructions at the moment it’s most relevant in their episode. User-friendly online tools ensure patients are well-informed by reinforcing messages from their joints class in manageable pieces, helping to align expectations around length of stay, discharge to home, and more.

For the St. Alexius team, *Connected Care* automates workflows and enables tracking and monitoring of large volumes of patients. Standardized *CarePaths* and automated patient satisfaction and patient-reported outcomes collection gives Dr. Bopp and his team the reliable, real-time data they need to not only meet their CJR targets, but actually deliver better care to patients.



“Before we started using Wellbe for PROMs collection, we had a hard time getting patients to complete their [surveys]. With Wellbe collecting the information, our completion rate is 95-100% and we’ve saved a tremendous amount of time in putting these reports together.”

Mark Johnson | Joint Coordinator

If patients veer off track, the care team is notified to ensure each patient is prepared for surgery, working to reduce cancellations. Automated check-ins allow care coordinators to prioritize their outreach to those most in need of attention. Low-risk patients can self-navigate through recovery while retaining a sense of high-touch, high-quality care from the comforts of home.



"The Care Path is wonderful. It made me feel connected to a team truly interested in my recovery."

St. Alexius patient

Wellbe enables high-performing health systems at over 60 sites across the U.S. to advance the coordination and quality of care. Founded in 2009, Wellbe's 2nd generation *Connected Care* solution engages and empowers patients to participate as partners with their providers. This coordinated participation delivers higher satisfaction, better outcomes, and improved efficiencies. Automated workflows and integrated pathways drive smart systems of care to reduce costs and increase care team productivity. In 2016, Wellbe debuted in Inc. Magazine's 35th annual Inc. 500, and AARP recently named Wellbe a 50+ Innovation Leader.



"We have a lot more confidence letting patients go home now because they can communicate with us. We're calling them after surgery and staying engaged through the Wellbe system. If there's an issue, we stress that they need to get a hold of us to ensure they receive the right care. All of this is facilitated by getting people comfortable with the Wellbe system."

Dr. Timothy Bopp

Improved outcomes, enhanced experiences, clearer expectations, and lower costs

Since implementing *Connected Care*, the joint team at St. Alexius has made measurable improvements to patient experiences and outcomes, all while lowering costs. Today, 99% of patients say they would have another surgery at the facility. This exceedingly high level of patient satisfaction is further supported by their willingness to report functional outcomes to the care team. After implementing *Connected Care*, CHI St. Alexius regularly sees PROMs completion rates of 95 to 100%. As CHI St. Alexius's Joint Coordinator Mark Johnson reveals, the biggest benefit comes in the time it saves his team.