



## The Knee and Hip Arthritis Service

The Tweed Hospital – Northern NSW Local Health District

This case study explores The Knee and Hip Arthritis Service at the Tweed Hospital in Northern NSW Local Health District (NNSWLHD).

It identifies the intended outcomes of the Service, how it was implemented and the results and impact of the Service so far.

### Overview

The Knee and Hip Arthritis Service (previously the Specialised Osteoarthritis Screening Clinic) provides evidence-based, person-centred care across primary and public health for patients with hip and knee joint pain related to osteoarthritis.

The Service promotes the use of non-surgical osteoarthritis management including education, exercise and weight management to target patient-specific goals related to pain, function and quality of life. A 12 month Project Officer position was employed to design and implement the Service. It connects suitable public, private and Non-Governmental organisations (NGO) services within the local community to assist patients to effectively self-manage their osteoarthritis during and following completion of the program.

The Service has been operating at The Tweed Hospital since June 2017. Since then, it has managed over 400 patients and clinical outcomes have been very positive, with high levels of patient satisfaction.

### Highlights from the Service

Of patients who participated in the Service:

**73%** had improved knee and hip function

**69%** had an improved pain score out of 10



**2 out of 3 patients** said their walking on flat ground had improved

**2 out of 3 patients** said their hip and knee in general had improved.

## Addressing local needs

The Knee and Hip Arthritis Service was developed to improve the access to services for patients with hip or knee osteoarthritis in the Tweed and Byron areas.

It sought to address the following issues:

- higher population growth in the Tweed area
- increasing aged population in the Tweed area, that was higher than the state average
- increasing demand placed on Tweed/Murwillumbah elective arthroplasty waiting lists
- limited referral pathways to services offering evidence-based osteoarthritis management strategies for those with hip and knee joint pain
- inconsistent communication between health professionals across both public and private health sectors who were involved in the management of a patient's osteoarthritis.

## Creating a holistic Service for patients

The NNSWLHD team were seeking to implement an evidence-based, multidisciplinary and holistic osteoarthritis management program in the Tweed and Byron area.

The Knee and Hip Arthritis Service was developed to:

- improve patient understanding of osteoarthritis
- improve patient confidence to effectively self-manage the symptoms related to osteoarthritis
- improve pain, function and quality of life for those with hip and knee osteoarthritis
- improve exercise and activity levels of those with osteoarthritis
- improve timely and consistent communication between health professionals in public and primary health sectors involved in a patient's osteoarthritis management
- minimise those proceeding toward joint arthroplasty either prematurely or unnecessarily
- improve overall patient experience and satisfaction levels in regards to osteoarthritis management.

The Service follows the Osteoarthritis chronic care program (OACCP) Model of Care.

### The Osteoarthritis chronic care program (OACCP)



OACCP is one of the 13 clinical initiatives in the [Leading Better Value Care \(LBVC\) program](#).

Clinicians developed the OACCP to:

- enable patients to self-manage their osteoarthritis
- remove, reduce or delay the need for surgery
- give better access to patients needing joint replacement surgery
- better prepare patients for surgery and improve surgical outcomes.

For more information on OACCP and LBVC, visit the [NSW Health website](#).

## Taking a collaborative approach

The Service works in partnership with General Practitioners (GPs), North Coast Primary Health Network (NCPHN), Orthopaedic Specialists and NNSWLHD's Integrated Care team.

Strategies for engagement include:

- patient interviews
- a Project Steering committee including district, Primary Health Network (PHN) and clinical representatives
- a Tweed-Byron PHN partnership – Quality Improvement Support Officers and GP Clinical Advisors
- GP practice visits and interviews
- meetings with Orthopaedic surgeons
- project reports and newsletters.
- use of Patient Reported Measures (PRMs)
- educational promotional events and dinners.

## Achieving outcomes that matter to patients

Clinical outcomes have been very positive and patients have reported high levels of satisfaction.

After three interventions over three months, patients (n=131) told us:



- **73% improved function** (Oxford Knee and Hip Score)
- **69% improved pain score** out of 10

At completion of the program at six months (n=93):



- **2 out of 3 patients** said their **walking on flat ground** had improved
- **2 out of 3 patients** said their **hip or knee** in general had improved.

Patients (n=130) were reviewed six to 18 months after leaving the program and:



**4 out of 5** did **not require surgery**, or did not go on a waiting list for joint surgery.

A mail out survey was sent to patients (n=37) six months after completing the program and found:



**78% of patients** said their '**day to day**' activities were **easier** now than before attending the Service.

The Service also pioneered the use of online secure messaging services (Medical Objects). This is a NSW public health service first.

Direct electronic information is securely sent directly to the doctor's IT device. This system has led to improved integration and coordination of patient care between primary and public services.

### Hear more from our patients and clinicians

The NNSWLHD team were involved in a [short video](#) that explores the Knee and Hip Arthritis Service and how it has impacted patients across the district.

[Learn more.](#)



## Sharing the initiative and celebrating success

NNSW have shared the success of their initiative in a number of ways:

- presentations at local community engagement forums and health symposiums within the district
- a [Leading Better Value Care video](#)
- regular updating of stakeholders via Leading Better Value Care meetings and quarterly newsletters
- entries in both local and statewide health awards for 2019 which resulted in the Service winning the [Secretary's Award for Value Based Healthcare](#) at the 2019 NSW Health Awards.

The Tweed Knee and Hip Arthritis Service will be expanded across NNSWLHD for people not requiring surgical intervention, as well as for those on the waiting list for surgery.

Systems for early identification of people with a Body Mass Index >40, and addressing obesity as a modifiable contributor to significant joint pain will be implemented. NNSWLHD will continue to communicate with GPs and Orthopaedic specialist throughout the process.



"I have so much to thank the program for. How do you say thank you when something has given you your freedom, your confidence and your life back?"

**Patient**

## More information

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To learn more about [Leading Better Value Care](#) and [value based healthcare](#), visit the [NSW Health website](#).

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