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**The Alliance Announces *QualityPath®* Designated Hospitals**

MADISON, WIS., Sept. 10, 2014 – The Alliance today announced the hospitals that will participate in the *QualityPath* initiative.

*QualityPath* identifies hospitals and physicians that – when working together – meet proven standards for delivering quality care for total hip replacement, total knee replacement and coronary artery bypass graft (CABG).

The designated *QualityPath* hospitals are:

* For Total Hip Replacement and Total Knee Replacement:
  + Meriter Hospital, Madison, Wis.,
  + Monroe Clinic, Monroe, Wis.,
  + Rockford Memorial Hospital, Rockford, Ill,
  + St. Clare Hospital, Baraboo, Wis.
* For Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (CABG):
  + St. Mary’s Hospital, Madison, Wis.

“We are pleased that these hospitals have met the high bar that was set to become a *QualityPath* designated provider,” Alliance President and CEO Cheryl DeMars said. “Designated hospitals have worked hard to prepare their organizations to meet quality criteria when the program launches on Jan. 1, 2015. This is not an easy task and we applaud their commitment to quality.”

Designated hospitals will qualify to perform *QualityPath* procedures beginning Jan. 1, 2015 when working with designated *QualityPath* physicians, who will be announced in December 2014. Employees and family members enrolled in an eligible health plan will have 100 percent health benefit coverage for pre-surgical care, the surgical procedure and follow-up care, such as physical therapy, when it is performed at a *QualityPath* provider.

*QualityPath* designation is based on national measures of quality, including complication rates as well as implementation of standardized clinical processes. In addition, designation requires reaching agreement on a lower, bundled price for the specific procedures included in *QualityPath.*

Alliance data helps illustrate the potential impact for *QualityPath* patients. For example, for total knee replacement, Alliance claims data show 32 percent more post-surgery emergency room visits overall at non-*QualityPath* hospitals than for patients whose surgery was at a *QualityPath* hospital.

Physicians and facilities that will perform elective procedures as *QualityPath* designated providers completed an extensive application process, which included a review of past patient outcomes. They also committed to implement important standardized clinical processes for these procedures by Jan. 1, 2015; to provide care at a bundled price that covers all elements of the procedure; and to offer a warranty to cover the cost of complications.

All hospitals and physicians who provide these procedures within The Alliance network were invited to apply to participate in the *QualityPath* initiative. Hospitals and physicians will be able to apply to join the program annually.

“We are happy to direct interested employers, health care providers, and patients to more information about *QualityPath’s* ability to drive better value, contribute to better outcomes and deliver a better patient experience,” said DeMars. Answers to frequently-asked questions and other details are available on The Alliance website at [www.the-alliance.org](http://www.the-alliance.org).

About The Alliance

The Alliance is an employer-owned, not-for-profit cooperative that moves health care forward by controlling costs, improving quality and engaging individuals in their health. Its more than 200 employer members provide health benefit coverage to 90,000 individuals in Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa.

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NOTE: Cheryl DeMars is available for interviews.

**Quotes from Designated *QualityPath* Facilities**

**Meriter Hospital**

“At Meriter – UnityPoint Health, we’re focused on coordinated care that provides our patients with the very best value when it comes to their health care. Health care value does not only involve providing the best quality of care and patient outcomes; it also involves partnering with employers and insurers  in new and innovative ways to ensure that these high quality outcomes are achieved in a cost-conscious manner ,” said Phil Swain, director of orthopedics and rehabilitation at Meriter – UnityPoint Health. “We are thrilled to partner with The Alliance in a joint commitment to improve the overall quality and delivery of health care in our area.”

**Monroe Clinic**

“The excellence we’ve achieved in knee and hip replacements is a combination of skilled surgeons, dedicated expert nursing and therapy staff, attention to detail and robust patient education that prepares each and every patient for a full and successful recovery” explains Wes Speer, Doctorate of Physical Therapy and Coordinator of Monroe Clinic’s Joint Replacement Center of Excellence. “This unique collaboration and motivational setting gets results—which means patients can return to everyday life quickly and more completely than ever before. It also means we’ve exceeded national hospital standards for recovery time, pain management and overall customer satisfaction.”

**Rockford Memorial Hospital**

“Rockford Health System and The Alliance share not only common goals but a commitment to innovation,” said Gary Kaatz, Rockford Health System President and CEO. “Together we are focused on how to improve the patient experience, achieve the highest quality outcomes, and enhance value. We are excited to begin this new QualityPath program to benefit Alliance members.”

**St. Clare Hospital**

“SSM Health Care is pleased The Alliance has created the Quality Path program, rewarding those health systems dedicated to providing high quality, efficient care to patients.  It aligns with our commitment to provide exceptional care and value to patients.  We are proud that St. Clare Hospital, a member of the SSM family, has been selected to participate in the Quality Path program for Total Knee and Total Hip Replacement.”

*– Quote from Damond Boatwright, Regional President/CEO of Hospital Operations, SSM Healthcare of Wisconsin*

**St. Mary’s Hospital**

“SSM Health Care is proud that St. Mary’s Hospital in Madison, a member of the SSM Health Care family has been selected to participate in the Quality Path program for CABG. Quality Path rewards those health systems dedicated to providing high quality, efficient care to patients, which aligns well with our commitment to provide exceptional care and value to those we serve.”

*– Quote from Damond Boatwright, Regional President/CEO of Hospital Operations, SSM Healthcare of Wisconsin*

**About Meriter–UnityPoint Health**

Meriter – UnityPoint Health provides comprehensive, coordinated care to patients throughout the Greater Madison area through our clinics, hospital and home care services. Employing more than 3,500 people, Meriter offers primary and specialty care, including heart and vascular, women’s health, and the busiest birthing center in Wisconsin.

The goal of our orthopedic program is simple: return our patients to normal function as quickly and safely as possible. We combine advanced technologies and clinical expertise with a compassionate treatment philosophy, treating the whole person instead of simply treating the affected area.

Meriter is a 2013 recipient of the National Research Corporations’ coveted Innovative Best Practice award, Top Rated Adult Doctors award and Top Rated Pediatric Doctors award. For more information, visit meriter.com.

**About Monroe Clinic**

State-of-the-art joint replacement procedures – including anterior hip—are performed in Monroe Clinic’s state-of-the-art hospital and surgery center. Monroe Clinic has a dedicated location and team for the care of knee and hip replacement patients. The team is hand-picked for their expertise, positive attitude, and desire to provide outstanding service. Led by highly-skilled orthopaedic surgeons, clinical staff work together to provide exceptional care. In-depth education of patients and their coaches helps customers participate fully in their successful recovery. With over 200 replacements completed since the new program began in November 2013, Monroe Clinic performance results exceed national standards in the area of 1) time in the hospital, 2) ability to walk and sit comfortably, 3) overall customer satisfaction, and 4) recommendation of the services to others.

**About Rockford Memorial Hospital**

The most comprehensive healthcare system in the region, Rockford Health System comprises Rockford Memorial Hospital, Rockford Health Physicians, Visiting Nurses Association, and Van Matre Health Rehabilitation Hospital. Known as “The Place for Surgery,” Rockford Memorial leads the region with a surgical program focused on innovation, teamwork and the patient experience, as well as continuous improvement through data measurement and the honing of best practices.

Through the *QualityPath* program, RHS offers Alliance Members a comprehensive Total Knee/Total Hip Replacement Program. The RHS joint replacement team of orthopedic surgeons, anesthesiologists, pre- and post-operative nursing care staff, therapists and case management utilizes a comprehensive quality score card with data from the electronic medical record to continuously improve outcomes. Patients are educated and engaged at every step of the way, to facilitate preparation and speed recovery.

**About St. Clare Hospital**

St. Clare Hospital is Sauk County’s largest primary care hospital serving the health care needs of residents in the greater Baraboo, Lake Delton and Wisconsin Dells area.  The campus serves the entire age spectrum, from the Childbirth Center to St. Clare Meadows Care Center, with two additional urgent care facilities in nearby communities. St. Clare Hospital offers primary care services, plus radiation oncology, dialysis, total joint replacement, women’s health services and chemical dependency treatment. In 2013, St. Clare Hospital was recognized as a Top Performer by The Joint Commission. It is one of three hospitals, two skilled nursing facilities, 61 clinic locations and a health plan in Wisconsin that are owned and operated by SSM Health Care, a Catholic faith-based not-for-profit health system located in St. Louis, Missouri.

**About St. Mary’s Hospital**

Serving South Central Wisconsin since 1912, St. Mary's Hospital offers a full range of inpatient and outpatient treatment and diagnostic services in primary care and nearly all specialties, including the Dean & St. Mary’s Cardiac Center, Family Birth Center, Neuroscience Center, Orthopedics and Emergency Services. In 2013, St. Mary’s Hospital was named one of the nation’s 50 Top Cardiovascular Hospitals by Truven Health Analytics. It is one of three hospitals, two skilled nursing facilities, 61 clinic locations and a health plan in Wisconsin that are owned and operated by SSM Health Care, a Catholic faith-based not-for-profit health system located in St. Louis, Missouri.

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