

Patient Safety and Care During the Pandemic Number One Concern for Award-Winning NCH Orthopedic Program

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the NCH Orthopedic Program continues to deliver top-quality services reflecting their uncompromising commitment to patient safety. The unit has been certified since 2014 by the Joint Commission as a Center of Excellence for their Total Hip and Total Knee Replacement programs. Joint Commission scores are based on patient feedback for meeting or exceeding the highest standards in the delivery of patient care. In December, the unit also received the People's Choice Award.

Staffed by board-certified orthopedic surgeons, and caring nursing, administrative and rehab staff, the 5 South Orthopedic team provides comprehensive multidisciplinary care for total joint replacements, fracture repairs, shoulder reconstructions, and muscle and soft tissue repairs for patients – many of which have co-morbidities such as cardiac or pulmonary diseases, diabetes or renal disease.

While the team has adapted to the new norms presented by the ongoing pandemic, they continue to operate at top levels.

“Our staff wears personal protective equipment and surgical masks, and we continue to stress key elements like patient education and instruction, which have changed,” explained Suzanne Graziano, MSN, RN, ONC, NE-BC, CNAT, NCH Director Orthopedics – 5 South.

During pre-surgical testing, patients are screened for COVID-19. If a patient tests positive, the surgery is canceled and rescheduled, and they are quarantined at home with medical guidance. For those cleared for surgery, they are advised to stay away from anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.

“We also provide important pre-op advice about building the immune system,” said Graziano. “While each patient is different, we recommend that they should supplement with vitamin D and zinc to help strengthen the immune system before surgery and after surgery if they don’t already do so. Surgeons also advise patients to take a protein drink, pre-op.”

Patient education has also changed for the better. Jennifer Miller, MSN, RN, CMSRN, ONC, System Total Joint Coordinator, teaches pre-op classes that are now conducted one-on-one. At pre-admission, patients relay their information; then Miller follows up by phone or email with needed materials relative to their procedure.

In pre-op conversations, Miller reviews items such as how to best prepare for surgery, understand expectations for their hospital stay, and ensure a safety-based, solid, and reasonable discharge plan.

“We discuss rehab facility options, which are authorized by their insurance plans, the exercises required by their condition and how to perform them safely. We also discuss what they will need post-procedure, how to modify their home for success and identify who, if anyone, will be needed for at-home support,” Miller explained.

“It is very multifactorial between the nutrition and exercise while being ready mentally, emotionally and physically. You can’t go from zero to 60 in a weekend; it is a marathon, not a sprint. So, we make sure that patients are well-prepared,” said Miller.

For more information about the NCH Orthopedic Program, contact Jennifer Miller, System Total Joint RN Coordinator at (239) 624-3998.

“We are keeping our orthopedic surgical elective patients **very safe**, and their recovery is in a **safe, healing environment**. Instruction and education are the key elements. **We educate all of our patients.**”

Suzanne Graziano, MSN, RN, ONC, NE-BC, CNAT, NCH Healthcare System, Director, Orthopedics 5 South

Joint Commission Disease-Specific Certification in Total Knee Replacement since 2014

- Based on the use of evidence-based clinical guidelines and tracking and reporting of performance measures
- Certification validates a framework of standardized care that reduces risk and leads to improved patient outcomes
- Of the 38 organizations in Florida with certification in hip/knee replacement by the Joint Commission, NCH is the only organization in the Southwest Florida region

NCH Orthopedic Unit People’s Choice Award in December 2020

- Most favorable patient comments regarding care
- The award underscores the lasting impact that 5 South has on patients
- Confirms exceptional care provided by staff
- Dozens and dozens of comments received from pleased patients

NCH Orthopedic Unit Services includes comprehensive multidisciplinary care for:

- Total joint replacements
- Fracture repairs
- Shoulder reconstructions
- Muscle and soft tissue repairs



Suzanne Graziano, MSN, RN, ONC, NE-BC, CNAT, NCH Healthcare System, Director, Orthopedics 5 South



NCH Orthopedic team members: (back, l to r): Robert Yoshida, RN, Eileen McMahon, PT, Ananda Pamankada, CT; (middle, l to r): Kristin Mascotti, MD, Chief Medical Officer, Susan Riviere, RN, Claire Rich, RN, Jennifer Arca, RN, Jennifer Miller, RN, Total Joint RN Coordinator, Athena Custodio, RN, Taryn Flynn, Discharge Planning Assistant; Yuri Mykoo, Administrative Director Inpatient Services; Sabine Camil, CT; (bottom kneeling, l to r): Widelme Gourdet, US, Wendy Hahn, RN, Suzanne Graziano, RN, Director Orthopedics, Katherine Carbo, RN



Jennifer Miller, MSN, RN, CMSRN, ONC, System Total Joint Coordinator