



To Whom It May Concern,

It is my pleasure to comment on the positive impact that the Mercy Spine & Back Care clinical pathway has had on my practice, on spine care at Mercy Hospital, and on our patients.

I have been an orthopedic spine surgeon in Chicago, IL for over 35 years. Currently I am affiliated with the Illinois Bone & Joint Institute as well as several hospital systems in Chicago including Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center, Mercy Hospital, Presence Saint Francis Hospital, Presence Saint Joseph Hospital, Swedish Covenant Hospital, and Weiss Memorial Hospital.

Since I have been collaborating with Dr. Allgeler (the primary spine practitioner of the program) in 2013, I have observed direct improvements in overall spine care system-wide. Examples include a decrease in the need for me to manage a subgroup of clearly non-surgical patients, better protocol for patients reporting to the emergency department for spine problems, and lower admission rates for patients who report to the ED for spine pain. Overall, patients that have gone through the program for which I have collaborated on seem to be very satisfied, and I know the patient satisfaction rates and clinical outcomes associated with non-surgical care at Mercy have been exceptional since the program began. None of this has impacted my surgical volumes significantly and has in fact freed some of the time that has in the past been wasted on inappropriate cases or consults. Dr. Allgeler and I are in direct contact consistently and it has been a pleasure working with him. I would highly recommend the use of a clinical pathway and an initial triage system for the overall management of spine pain patients to other hospital systems as this has been a very positive experience for me thus far.

I hope this information is helpful with your efforts to consider implementation of a similar program in your hospital system. Please feel free to email me with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Charles Slack, MD

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