



October 08, 2010

UNMC Orthopaedic Surgery Department implements program to reduce fractures.

First in Nebraska to launch Own the Bone program related to osteoporosis.

The Department of Orthopaedic Surgery and Rehabilitation at the University of Nebraska Medical Center is the first in Nebraska to launch the American Orthopaedic Association's Own The Bone™ Program.

The program is aimed to better identify, evaluate and treat patients that suffer from an osteoporosis or low bone density-related fragility fracture (a broken bone that results from a fall from standing height or less). It brings focus to the severe health implications of fragility fractures and the multi-faceted approach hospitals or clinics can employ to ensure these patients receive the most comprehensive care.

"With the incidence of fracture among patients age 50 and over significantly on the rise, we felt we needed to take action to increase the overall awareness and improve utilization of evidence-based management of osteoporosis and low bone density in fragility fractures," said Kevin Garvin, M.D., professor and chairman of the UNMC Department of Orthopaedic Surgery.

"Being chosen as first in Nebraska to spearhead the Own the Bone program is an honor," Dr. Garvin said. "We are excited to take a leadership role in the community by identifying at-risk individuals through our clinics and working together with their primary care physicians, so that we can offer our patients the most comprehensive care to achieve and maintain better bone health."

Statistics surrounding this health issue are alarming. According to the National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF), up to 50 percent of all women and 25 percent of men over the age of 50 will sustain fragility fractures in their remaining lifetime.

The American Bone Health Prevalence Report states that more people in the United States suffer a fragility fracture each year than are diagnosed with a heart attack, stroke or breast cancer combined, and the number of these fractures is projected to significantly increase as the population ages.

Studies show that patients who have had a fragility fracture are 2 to 4 times more likely to experience another fracture than those who have never had a fracture. In addition, the National Committee for Quality Assurance reports that only 1 in 5 Medicare patients have received the osteoporosis care they needed after a fracture.

Beau Konigsberg, M.D., an adult reconstructive surgeon in the department, led the efforts to institute this program at UNMC.

"Our overall goal is to reduce the incidence of future fractures and improve patient care by promoting bone health," Dr. Konigsberg said. "We plan to do this by initiating an avenue of communication between UNMC orthopaedic faculty, our patients, and their primary care physicians, to create a multidisciplinary physician-patient approach to improving bone health in the community."

Dr. Konigsberg and fellow surgeons in the department wanted to measure the effectiveness of their efforts through the implementation of the Own the Bone program.

The program is a national web-based quality improvement registry that ensures that patients with fragility fractures are screened and appropriately treated for low bone density or osteoporosis. It incorporates 10 measures for reducing future fractures and provides the UNMC Department of Orthopaedic Surgery with immediate feedback on its program



performance. This allows UNMC to measure its success and benchmark itself against other institutions.

By simply entering information into the registry, results can be immediately quantified and health care providers can begin to see how our actions are positively affecting patient care. The program is able to produce internal and external benchmarking results that reflect how patients are being positively affected by Own the Bone.

“A comprehensive, multi-specialty approach will greatly reduce repeat fragility fractures for at-risk patients,” said Douglas R. Dirschl, M.D., chairman of the American Orthopaedic Association’s Critical Issues Committee. “Own the Bone gives hospitals or clinics the tools needed to address and curb this major health crisis.”

The American Orthopaedic Association, founded in 1887, is the oldest national orthopaedic association in the world. The AOA’s mission is to identify, develop, engage and recognize leadership to further the art and science of orthopaedics. For more information visit www.aoassn.org or call 847-318-7336.

Through world-class research and patient care, UNMC generates breakthroughs that make life better for people throughout Nebraska and beyond. Its education programs train more health professionals than any other institution in the state. Learn more at unmc.edu.