

Script – Print – When people aren't ready to go home

Earlier this year, Delmer Keilman of Earlville, Illinois, was recovering from a knee replacement surgery and was doing fine with rehabilitation. But about a month later, he developed an infection unrelated to his surgery that required antibiotic treatment. That's when his doctor suggested swing bed services.

"I was in the hospital for 12 days because I needed to have 24-hour care," he says. "And I wasn't really excited about that. But what else could I do? So that's when they transferred me to the swing bed program."

Swing bed services provide people the opportunity to receive extended care in a hospital setting. These services benefit people, especially those who live in rural communities and don't have access to as many resources as those in larger cities. It's also an alternative to a skilled nursing facility.

Lisa Garcia is vice president and chief nursing officer for OSF HealthCare Saint Clare Medical Center in Princeton, Illinois, and at Saint Luke Medical Center in Kewanee, Illinois. She says a coordinated approach to swing bed services helps each person reach their greatest potential before they're released to go home.

"It's a program for those people who've been at the hospital. Maybe you've had a knee replacement or some type of joint replacement or a condition that you become deconditioned, and you really can't transition home yet," says Garcia. "You come to our facilities to get stronger so you're successful when you finally return home."

People are cared for by the same hospital staff but with a different focus on rehab or extended care. During a swing bed stay, physicians are available 24/7 and skilled nurses provide the care. Other members of the care team are physical, occupational and speech therapists, as well as dietitians and pharmacists.

In addition to Medicare, most private insurers cover a stay in swing bed program. It also requires a physician's order and insurance pre-certification. The staff at OSF HealthCare facilities can help with the screening process and paperwork.

The average length of stay in swing bed services varies depending on the person's needs and goals. It could be a three-week stay for therapy or six weeks or longer if they are being treated for an infection. OSF swing bed service is also available for non-OSF patients who might need in-patient rehab, wound care, infection treatment or pain management following surgery.

"It's really an underutilized program that I think would benefit a lot more people, and they just don't realize that the program is available," says Garcia. "And the patients are being taken care of by the people who are in your community." Ask your provider or discharge planner if the OSF swing bed option is available for you.

Delmer Keilman is a believer. He's feeling better after his infection cleared up and recommends the swing bed services to anyone facing a similar situation.

"The program works seamlessly," Keilman says. "I would have no apprehensions ever again about going into a swing program. They treated me with the utmost care, and I really appreciate it."

Swing bed services are available at these OSF HealthCare Hospitals:

OSF Saint Luke Medical Center in Kewanee, Illinois

OSF Holy Family Medical Center in Monmouth, Illinois

OSF Saint Paul Medical Center, Mendota, Illinois

OSF Saint James Medical Center, Pontiac, Illinois

OSF Saint Clare Medical Center, Princeton, Illinois

OSF St. Francis Hospital & Medical Group, Escanaba, Michigan

For more information on the swing bed program, visit the [OSF HealthCare website](#).