



SURGICAL AFFILIATES MANAGEMENT GROUP HELPS HOSPITAL EARN TOP TRAUMA VERIFICATION ... AGAIN

Mercy San Juan Medical Center – A Success Story

After thousands of hours of ongoing monitoring for compliance – as well as intense effort and preparation with the help of a dedicated team of professionals – Mercy San Juan Medical Center, a 370-bed facility in Carmichael, California, successfully completed the rigorous criteria of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) for reverification of its Level II Trauma Center.

Both ACS verification and reverification require an intense effort by hospitals and medical staff, but the benefits to patients, the community and to hospitals make it a worthy endeavor. The presence of a community trauma center leads to faster access to

quality care for patients in crisis while creating a medical environment that encourages staying on top of the latest in surgical advancements and evidence-based care. It also fosters a “halo” effect throughout the hospital, resulting in improved performance across multiple departments.

SURGICAL AFFILIATES
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Mercy San Juan Medical Center (MSJMC) was one of the first hospitals in the nation to undergo the reverification process under the "Orange Book," the most recent version of the ACS' *Resources for Optimal Care of the Injured Patient*. This manual defines the criteria that trauma centers must meet as well as the essential resources and standards for the optimal care of injured patients they must offer.

Mercy San Juan Medical Center Takes Steps to Reverification

Realizing that the complex process for ACS verification and reverification requires more internal experience and resources than hospital staff and surgeons in private practice can commit to, many hospitals decide to utilize the expertise and leadership of outside resources.

To support the Trauma Center development from the ground up, through all phases of the initial verification effort, MSJMC tapped Surgical Affiliates Management Group, Inc. (Surgical Affiliates), the nation's leading surgical hospitalist company and the only company with proven, published results for its program. With its extensive trauma and acute care surgery expertise, Surgical Affiliates also has a proven track record of successfully taking hospitals through the verification and reverification processes.

The Surgical Affiliates team includes dedicated surgeons trained in trauma/critical care, experienced trauma medical directors, trauma nurse managers, trauma registrars and trauma support personnel who have run various levels of trauma centers. Team members have been active trauma center site reviewers for the American College of Surgeons and state-specific trauma centers. They also bring a complete understanding of the nuances of essential standards detailed in the American College of Surgeons' *Resources for Optimal Care of the Injured Patient*.

The verification process of the MSJMC Trauma Center began in 1998. Hospital leadership believed adding a trauma center was an important move for the community. Patients needing trauma care frequently had to bypass their local hospital and travel to out-of-town facilities to receive timely treatment for serious injuries or illnesses requiring prompt surgery.

Both patients and physicians wanted to have a hometown Trauma Center in Carmichael and to have potentially lifesaving surgical services available. Excess travel time for trauma patients who lack rapid access to high quality care can lead to serious consequences.



“Securing ACS reverification is a major milestone for Mercy San Juan, as it validates our ability to provide exceptional trauma care to our community. Earning reverification of our trauma program is a critical component of accomplishing our mission of serving the community and providing quality healthcare. We earned this designation following an intensive year-long initiative, one of the most demanding and complex in the U.S. It was a tremendous effort for our trauma team, physicians and employees to undertake, and it couldn’t have happened without the leadership and expertise of Dr. Leon Owens and his Surgical Affiliates team guiding and preparing us for the ACS review.”

Brian Ivie, President, Mercy San Juan Medical Center
(Level II Trauma Center & Surgical Hospitalist Program)

With the help and guidance of Surgical Affiliates, MSJMC achieved its Trauma Center verification, enabling the hospital to meet the needs of its community, build a strong surgical program and bring improvements to other areas as well. Since its inception, MSJMC has consistently increased volume, from 750 trauma patients in 2001 to 1,991 in 2014. Also, the number of patient transfers into the hospital per year increased from 55 in 2011 to 254 in 2014. In addition, the transfer-in population combined with the ability to get out-of-network and capitated patients repatriated to their home systems when their conditions stabilized significantly improved the hospital payer mix, increasing reimbursement.

A Pathway to Success

In 2014, when the ACS introduced its updated guideline criteria for reverification, MSJMC turned to Surgical Affiliates once again. The reverification process was perhaps more intense than the original verification process. MSJMC hospital leaders note



that among the most difficult components for achieving reverification are performance improvement and patient safety performance improvement plans (PIPS), which account for 84% of all reverification failures. Surgical Affiliates helps hospitals address these important areas by identifying gaps in their procedures and building performance-

improvement plans. Additional areas examined included:

- » Maximum 15-minute response time from surgeons
- » 24/7 coverage of key subspecialties such as neurosurgery and orthopedics
- » Full range of specialty services including anesthesia and diagnostics (CT & MRI) around the clock
- » Minimum standards for turn-around times in lab and diagnostic imaging support

For MSJMC, achieving its reverification was a rigorous process, taking more than one year. In addition to the site surveyors' meticulous review of how the hospital performed, they also pulled 100 random patient charts to identify areas for improvement. This was not a process that could be prepared for within a few months' time. It took ongoing focus and commitment from both Surgical Affiliates and MSJMC.

With the support of Surgical Affiliates' trauma experts, MSJMC passed the reverification review on its first try, reconfirming the hospital's ability to provide exceptional trauma care to its community. Hospital leadership reported that the reverification process was successful and well worth the effort.

Guidance Through Any Stage

Surgical Affiliates also works with hospitals that do not currently have trauma status and desire to become a trauma center, to raising their level of trauma designation and those who may have a provisional ACS or state verification to help them achieve full accreditation. For example, one hospital

in Southern California that had a provisional one-year ACS verification asked Surgical Affiliates for help and has since achieved a full accreditation. Additionally, an outcome of Surgical Affiliates' presence within the hospital was the "halo" effect which changed the facility environment and improved performance. As a result, the hospital has tripled its volume.

Surgical Affiliates also offers a hospital-based programmatic approach to 24/7 in-house trauma, acute care surgery and orthopedic surgery programs that ensures hospital/physician goals are aligned, best practices are consistently observed, and that care is coordinated with other hospital teams and departments. The result of this approach is better communication with patients and families, and stronger, more sustainable programs for hospitals.

