

5 KEYS

TO A SUCCESSFUL SURGICALIST PROGRAM

SAMGI
SURGICAL AFFILIATES
MANAGEMENT GROUP



INTRODUCTION

Nested into many of the most responsive acute care and trauma surgery programs is a strategy that relies on surgicalists — highly trained, board-certified surgeons who provide acute care and trauma surgery (ACS/trauma) in a dedicated in-hospital setting.

Because ACS/trauma cases are unpredictable and unplanned, relying upon local, on-call surgeons who may be burdened by elective operations, busy clinics and rounding obligations can create conflicts that interfere with the immediate treatment of patients with urgent issues. This invites risks of scheduling conflicts that can produce gaps in patient care, interfere with surgeons' work-life balance, and force a hospital to turn away emergency surgical cases. That's why many leading trauma facilities depend on surgicalists' 24/7/365 availability.

Surgicalists become a devoted resource in ACS/trauma situations. They don't have competing duties which cause friction with those surgical cases that materialize. Rather, a responsive surgicalist care model has proven to create not only better care outcomes for patients, but also significant operational and financial outcomes for a healthcare facility.

So what are the keys to a high-performance surgicalist program? What are the elements that can deliver the value of focused, conflict-free surgeons who cover a range of specialties from ACS/trauma care to neurosurgery, orthopedics, GI and urology? Here are five factors that are essential to a successful surgicalist program.

1 WORK WITH A SURGICALIST GROUP WITH A PROVEN TRACK RECORD

A high-performance surgicalist provider has a proven track record of improving quality of care, CMI and financial performance. For example, a peer-reviewed, five-year study conducted by Sacramento's Sutter Medical Center found that bringing in surgicalists had the effect of reducing overall complications by 43 percent. In the same study, patient stays were reduced from an average of 7.5 days to 6.5 days. Spending on care was also reduced by $2 million.

In addition to saving both lives and money, a proven program that integrates surgicalists into the fabric of a facility significantly improves patient satisfaction scores. Patients can also receive immediate urgent surgical care rather than transfer to larger hospitals. This elimination of patient transfer — combined with decreased time-to-treament — can have a direct positive result on the quality of patient care.

2 IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM DESIGNED TO PROMOTE SURGEON GROWTH AND RETENTION

By bringing in surgicalists, hospitals tap into an effective channel to access new and in-demand talent that traditional hiring practices exclude. For over-burdened surgeons, there's a growing desire to achieve a better work-life balance. Discouraged by what they see as long hours and unpredictable schedules, many surgeons skip traditional hospital staff jobs early in their career in favor of surgicalist positions.

A recent American Medical Association (AMA) survey reveals that 92 percent of physicians aged 35 or younger report that work-life balance is essential. Many "top-talent" hires see value in being able to schedule their hours in advance while retaining more personal time. At the same time, younger surgeons are less likely to be interested in building practices from scratch. They enjoy the freedom of having a robust clinical practice in conjunction with predictable scheduling. For hospitals motivated to land top surgeons, surgicalist programs can be especially attractive.

3 BUILD A CULTURE OF "YES"

Well-conceived surgicalist programs enable hospitals to say "yes" to patients at the most vulnerable and critical times. For many rural or remote facilities, the default is to rely on larger hospitals to provide life-saving surgical treatments. Surgicalists support a culture of "yes" by making timely intervention possible. This drives access to care while also increasing patient satisfaction. Additionally, surgicalist teams help to create a hospital-wide culture of "yes" through collaborative, collegial interactions.

For many surgeons, getting to "yes" means saying "yes" to more work and "no" to a better work-life balance. The nationwide situation for surgeon work-life balance is dire. Burnout is a very serious issue that threatens the integrity of care for hospitals of all sizes. When polled, 51 percent of physicians reported experiencing frequent or constant feelings of burnout in 2017. This was up from 40 percent in 2013.

4 CONTINUITY OF CARE FROM SURGERY THROUGH CONVALESCENCE

An effective surgicalist program not only reduces emergency surgery transfers but enables hospitals formerly unable to provide care for more-complex patients to treat them throughout the entire care cycle. So, hospitals that adopt surgicalist programs see increased surgical volumes which keep patients within a single, stable care environment. This continuity of care can also increase long-term patient retention by ensuring patients stay within a hospital network for all follow-up procedures. In many cases, this means continued patient care from the initial emergency surgery all the way through recovery and convalescence.

5 MULTI-SPECIALTY EXPERTISE

When surgicalists are brought in, hospitals can acquire the skills of highly specialized ACS/trauma surgeons around the clock to prevent the need to transfer patients to larger facilities. They have 24/7/365 on demand access to surgeons specializing in general surgery, trauma, neurosurgery, orthopedics, GI and urology. Each hospital can cultivate its surgicalist teams based on hospital data, local demographics and other points that create a well-rounded, gap-free care setting where patients can be operated on within the hospital. Altogether, a surgicalist program enables hospitals to benefit from appropriate admissions combined with immediate, appropriate and complete care.



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ARE YOU READY TO IMPROVE PATIENT OUTCOMES, STAFF RETENTION AND PERFORMANCE?

The bottom line...hospitals nationwide are improving performance, reputation and revenue with surgicalist plans: turnkey agreements where the administrative management of surgeons is handled by a third-party. In many cases, they see a rapid boost in quality of care because surgicalists take on cases with an immediacy that private-practice surgeons often cannot. In collaboration with surgicalists, hospital administrators can focus on integrating standardized emergency surgical care programs that transform their acute care and trauma programs by:

- Improving emergency surgical efficiency
- Shortening time to surgery
- Improving CMI
- Improving patient health outcomes
- Reducing complications
- Reducing risk of life-threatening errors
- Shortening lengths of stay
- Improving patient satisfaction
- Decreasing care variation
- Reducing revenue leakage stemming from lost follow-up appointments and procedures
- Improving work-life balance for hospital staff

TALK TO SAMGI

SAMGI (Surgical Affiliates Management Group) has been setting the standard for surgicalist performance for over 25 years. Our programs are built around the five keys above and are run by board-certified surgeons in collaboration with an on-site medical director. We provide hospitals with full-service acute care and trauma surgery, neurosurgery, orthopedics, GI and urology programs. Created and owned by surgeons, SAMGI helps healthcare facilities around the country implement 24/7/365 surgical programs that deliver improved patient and performance outcomes.

Learn more about how SAMGI Surgicalist Program can benefit your facility. Let us show you show you how your surgical programs can reach their full potential with a proven solution that improves patient care and your bottom line.

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