



Physician Recruitment & Your Center:

By Marc Jang

Four Questions to Consider

Physician recruitment is a necessary activity for ASCs of all types — including centers still under development, newly-formed centers in the process of ramping up, and established centers looking to revitalize their operations. This article focuses on the importance of physician recruitment activities for existing surgery centers.

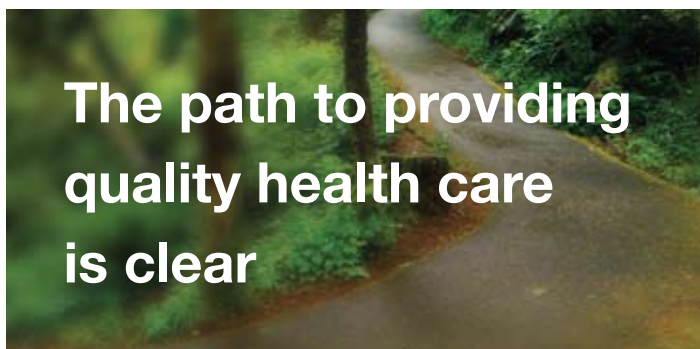
1 Q: Why Should My Center Recruit Additional Physicians?

A: Quite simply, physician recruitment allows your center to increase its case volume and revenues. Most centers have excess capacity to allow new physicians to join with minimal disruption to their existing schedule and activities. This new volume is beneficial because it can help drive out system inefficiencies. Physician recruitment also allows your center to maximize the space, staff and equipment you already have in place, and counteract inflationary pressures.

Bottom line: bringing on additional physicians allows your center to realize economies of scale by helping you get more “bang for your buck” from the staff, equipment, location and utilities you’re already using.

2 Q: What Type of Physicians Should I Add?

A: When considering the type of physicians and specialties to target, start by examining what your center already has in place. Ideally, you want to maximize your existing services by leveraging the core competencies of your equipment, center layout, staff, and staff skill sets. Adding new specialties often makes sense, especially if your center is single specialty because it helps you spread your risk across multiple specialties and better absorb reimbursement changes and market trends. Just remember that new specialties require separate feasibility analyses when determining whether they make sense financially in your center.



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When evaluating which specialties make the most sense to add, consider which ones will be complimentary to the procedures and specialties your center already features. Also consider the physical limitations of your center in terms of space; your center's layout and ability to expand; the new equipment that would be required; how much changes and additions will cost; and how long it will take to see a return on investment, access to capital and the ability to bring in new staff suited to new specialties or train existing staff to handle new procedures.

Bottom line: examine which specialties will work best with your center's current specialty mix and everything your center already has in place, including your center's equipment, staff, layout and ability to expand.

3 Q: How Do I Find New Physician Prospects?

A: Finding interested and qualified physicians can be one of the most challenging and time-consuming aspects of the physician recruitment process. When identifying physician prospects, be creative. There are a lot of resources available to help in your search. Here are just a few you may want to consider:

Existing contacts: Your center's current physicians, staff and partners usually know the local medical community very well. Start by talking with them about any physicians they know who are looking for a new place to do procedures or who are unhappy in their current situation. Also talk with your center's existing vendors; they often know the physicians in the area well and can advise you on ones looking for a change.

Networking: Interact with contacts inside and out of the medical community at local meetings, societies and functions. Attending activities such as these can help you discover information from unlikely sources simply by talking. Attending local medical society and ambulatory surgery center association meetings can also put you in front of groups of physicians and administrators who have information to share or are looking for assistance.

Other resources: You can purchase physician lists, market databases and more from national companies that will allow you to target certain physicians, specialties and areas more easily. Also consider the telephone book, Internet search engines and local medical society membership lists.

Anesthesia providers: The anesthesia providers at your center often work with other centers and physicians in your area as well. Check with them to see if they know which ones are pleased with their current situation and which ones are looking for a change.

Bottom line: when looking to recruit new physicians, start by exploring your current list of contacts and networks. From there, expand your search to include market resources, databases, meeting functions and more.

4 Q: When Should I Start?

A: Physician recruiting should be an ongoing process. And to be effective, you need to start before it's too late. Your center should always be recruiting physicians, either directly or indirectly, as long as you have the capacity to support additional procedures, new specialties and more doctors. Adding new physicians and specialties to your center will help you better serve your local community, expand your patient base, maximize your center's operations and improve partner and patient satisfaction.

Bottom line: if your center isn't currently working to recruit additional physicians or at least considering it, you need to start before it's too late.

Ongoing physician recruitment is essential for centers of all sizes and stages. Help your center proactively stay ahead of the game by constantly looking out for new specialty and physician additions that could help make your center more efficient, productive and profitable. □



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