



Surgery coordination technology is a game changer

Defragging a Mess

By Gavin Fabian

Surgery coordination has historically been a fragmented and time-consuming communication mess involving email, text messages, phone calls, white boards, and word of mouth. Significant time is spent coordinating schedules and ensuring everyone involved in a case—including physician office staff, nurses, surgeons, anesthesiologists, vendor reps, and others—remain current on changes and requests.

Unforeseen circumstances frequently impact or alter a case, including missing paperwork, a change in how a procedure is to be performed, medical device change requests, and last-minute scheduling conflicts/delays. Without consistent processes for communicating and managing updates in real time, the likelihood of errors is high. When this happens, case delays and cancellations are quick to follow.

Fortunately, advances in cloud-based technology are helping physician offices, surgery centers, and hospitals to streamline surgical case communication and coordination. Similar to a project management tool, surgery coordination systems simplify tasks by providing an at-a-glance view of where a patient is at each step in the case, from scheduling all the way through discharge.

These systems allow the physician's office to quickly pull from real-time schedule and patient demographic information and populate the system to create a case list. Case teams are easily added, enabling communication and coordination to ensue around the case. Automated alerts are sent to every person involved in the case, including vendor reps, each time an update or request is made, which ensures everyone remains current on case details. Because these systems are

cloud-based, information is easily accessible to those who need it, regardless of location, either through a laptop or mobile device such as an iPhone or Android.

Time Is Money

Cloud-based surgery coordination systems are growing in popularity because of the many benefits they provide. Physician offices and surgery centers report significant savings in time and cost as a result of their ability to streamline processes and minimize touch points. The experiences of the three medical centers described below demonstrate the wide-ranging benefits that these digitized systems bring.

With 450 cases each month, Crown Point Surgery Center's clinical and business office teams in Parker, Colorado, were spending significant labor hours on surgical case communication and coordination. Simply trying to ascertain where each patient was in the pre-op process was labor intensive and prone to error when relying on traditional manual methods. To solve its communication and coordination challenges, Crown Point implemented Casetabs' cloud-based surgery communication suite. The solution was integrated with the center's practice management solution, which synced schedule and patient demographic data across both systems. Physician office staff and vendors were provided immediate access to the system (and schedules) through an app on their mobile device. Since streamlining surgery communication and reducing communication touch points, Crown Point saves more than \$6,500 per month in labor hours (82 front office hours and 123 nursing hours per month).

This rapidly advancing technology also bridges the gap between physician offices and surgery centers/hospitals. As a result, surgery coordination technology creates a new way for centers to increase their desirability and, in turn, pull in cases. After all, the easier it is to work with a surgery center, the more desirable the center is to a physician practice and its staff.

For Buena Vista Surgery Center (BVSC) in Burbank, California, the move to a cloud-based surgery coordination system resulted in a tangible increase in case volume. The center's medical director, Raymond Raven, M.D., cites a 10% increase in case volume and attributes it to the ease with which physician office staff conveniently and safely

schedule cases at his center. According to Dr. Raven, the center has seen a direct path from cloud-based surgery coordination to increased caseloads.

Surgery Center of South Bay in Torrance, California, has also experienced tangible financial benefits since bringing surgery coordination online. With more than 300 cases each month, the center's clinical and business office teams spent considerable labor hours on surgical case communication and coordination. Struggling to track each patient's step in the pre-op process was detrimental. To solve these issues, they turned to the cloud. Since moving case communication and coordination to the cloud, the Surgery Center of South Bay saves an estimated \$3,500 per month in labor hours. According to Julie Adelchanow, the center's director, reducing communication touchpoints has been a true time and money saver.

Cloud-based systems are revolutionizing how surgery centers coordinate care.

Patient Comfort

The benefits associated with surgery coordination systems extend to patients and caregivers. Well-informed and efficient staff provide improved patient care and clear information to





family members. Meanwhile, digital surgery boards enable key people to follow the care process from check-in to discharge, with decreased distractions from overhead pagers and inter-department phone calls.

Unlike traditional whiteboards, surgery coordination systems offer real-time updates and a visual representation of where a patient is at each step in the procedure. With message boards in place immediately after a patient checks in, his/her family members can see where things stand in real time. Digital message boards are also being used in pre-op and post-op to provide doctors and nurses with a quick view of patient status and other relevant case information.

According to Heidi Partida, business office manager at La Peer Surgery Center in Los Angeles, since replacing the center's dated white boards with digital surgery boards, La Peer provides a level of comfort to its patients and their families that they were previously unable to offer. In addition to improving the patient experience, Partida believes the cloud-based technology advantageously differentiates La Peer from other centers.

Surgery coordination technology is proving to be a real game changer for practices, surgery centers/hospitals, and patients. As is often the case with technology, these systems can be leveraged for purposes outside of what was initially intended.

As several ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs) in Houston and Corpus Christi, Texas, quickly discovered during Hurricane Harvey, this technology can retrieve patient demographic information when traditional methods fail.

Most software systems allow access to schedules and patient information by logging into a computer, but this requires power and Internet access. Faced with massive power outages and flooding that made it too dangerous to travel, centers using a cloud-based surgery coordination system were able to access patient demographic information through their mobile phones. Patients were then called and informed of their surgery cancellation. Mobile access to case information also ensured everyone involved in the case—including physician office staff, nurses, surgeons, anesthesiologists, and vendor reps—remained current on any changes from the safety of their homes.

An Easy Choice

Advances in cloud-based technology provide an ideal fix for otherwise time-consuming, error-prone processes like surgery communication. Streamlining the surgical case communication and coordination process alleviates unnecessary delays and cancellations and improves efficiency and quality of care. These systems are affordable and easy to use, which makes replacing antiquated methods like phone, fax, and texting a no brainer. [GPI](#)

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