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Ways Professionalized Anesthesia Management **Improved My Surgery Center's Performance**

By Jeff Williams, MD, Gastroenterologist and ASC Owner



I was recently invited to participate in a webinar that addressed the ways professionalized anesthesia management impacted my center performance. By “professionalized,” they were not referring to the act of providing anesthesia, but the value a professional management company that works exclusively with ASCs in a high volume/fast pace environment provides to my internal anesthesia team and to my center in general.

The truth is that my anesthesia has been working so well for so long that I didn’t really think that I’d have much to share on the topic. But, when I started to think more about all the value they add I realized how much of my center’s efficiency, volume, revenue improvement, and – not to be underestimated – the number of staffing headaches avoided – could be directly tied to my anesthesia management partner. The following article highlights 6 of my comments from that webinar.



Jeff Williams, MD
Gastroenterologist and ASC Owner

1 Recruiting Expertise

When Dr. Williams first began working with CarePlus, one of his priorities was hiring anesthesia providers who would be an asset to his team and deliver excellent patient care. CarePlus quickly screened qualified CRNAs for experience, background, and skills. They recommended a short list of candidates to Dr. Williams. He hired two of them, and 10 years later, one remains in her position, and another CarePlus recruit has now been with the center for eight years.

“Their recruiting has been amazing,” said Dr. Williams. “We’ve never once within 10 years... had a void in the CRNA position for one day because they’re well covered. Even if an emergency comes up at the last minute, we’re able to quickly fill that, and our center doesn’t have any kinds of hiccups or delays because of anesthesia.”

CarePlus by the Numbers

100,000+
cases per year

11
years of experience

0
missed days of coverage



2 Clinical Strength & Alignment

For Dr. Williams, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of having stability and flexibility in an anesthesia management provider. His center normally has procedures scheduled five days a week, but as the first wave of COVID infections hit the U.S. in March and April 2020, it reduced operations to three or four days a week. Dr. Williams noted that because the center's anesthesia services could adapt and mobilize seamlessly, his staff was able to assess changing circumstances and move staff hours and cases accordingly.

The surgery center has been back to operating at 100% since this summer, and Dr. Williams feels confident that CarePlus is already anticipating and preparing for a potential second wave of the virus, from offering current guidelines and

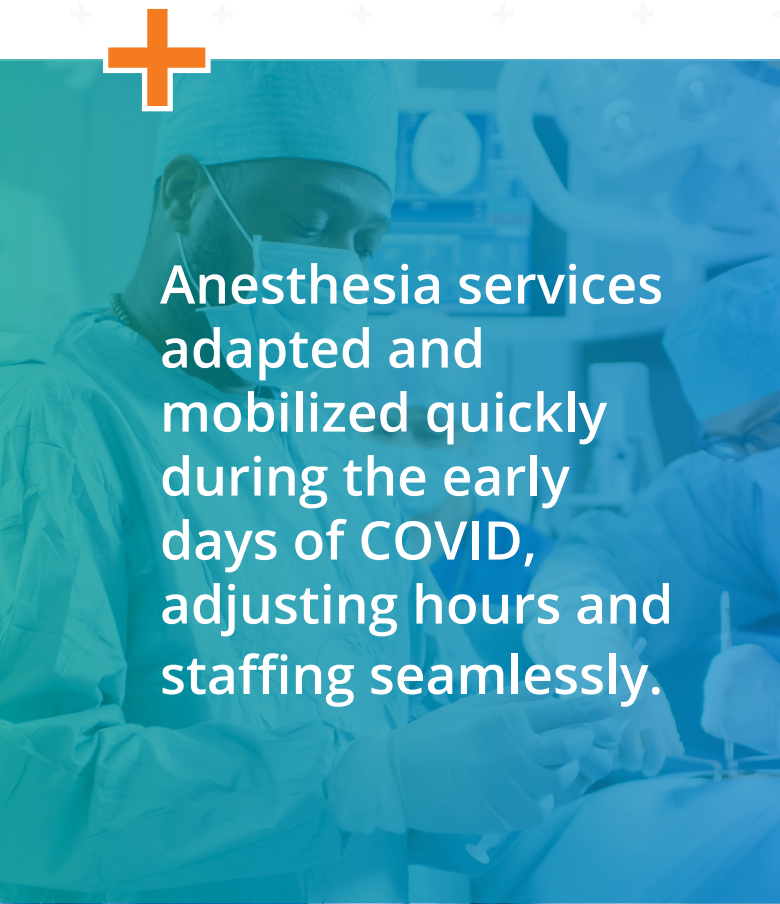
recommendations to accessing PPE that is in short supply.

"Through this whole process, anesthesia was at our side," said Dr. Williams. "Not only with the actual procedures, but CarePlus was vital with keeping us up to date with information. They were a good point of reference for us because they have many surgical centers. They were able to tell us what their center in Columbia, SC was doing that made sense, and we integrated their approach into ours. For instance, we had patients come in, and they were the first to say to us, why don't you have patient's family stay out in the parking lot to reduce the number of people in the waiting area? That's what they were doing in Columbia."

3 Physician Control

Before partnering with CarePlus, Dr. Williams' surgery center used conscious sedation for procedures. One of CarePlus' initial recommendations was to incorporate Propofol for greater efficiency. Dr. Williams reported that the change has allowed the center to complete more cases in the same amount of time, and has resulted in better patient compliance and reduced recovery time.

When the center was only using conscious sedation, pre-operative assessments were not a major focus, but adding Propofol added another dimension, Dr. Williams said. He emphasized that CRNAs have become an integral part of his team, collaborating closely with him to streamline processes and enhance patient care. CRNAs now do pre-operative evaluations for all of the center's patients a week or two before scheduled procedures, and they go over current cases with Dr. Williams on a daily basis.



Anesthesia services adapted and mobilized quickly during the early days of COVID, adjusting hours and staffing seamlessly.



“Over the past 10 years, we have really metamorphosized our pre-op evaluations,” said Dr. Williams. “It has allowed the anesthesia team, in conjunction with me, to come up with templated algorithm so that when patients come in—based on

ASA classifications, based on comorbidities, based on certain vitals, we can determine if are they appropriate or if they are not appropriate for an outpatient surgical center.”

4 Team Mentality & Operational Support

Having the ongoing support of an anesthesia services partner has enabled Dr. Williams to build a strong operational foundation for his surgery center. He relies on CarePlus as part of his extended team to manage complex and essential elements, from HR to compliance.

Every year, the center is recertified through the AAAHC. Dr. Williams recounted that during the last certification process three years ago, the organization focused heavily on anesthesia.



We had all the paperwork and manuals pulled from our anesthesia services,” said Dr. Williams. “They went over them, and at the end of the day, the woman, a 20-year healthcare veteran, noted that these were the best documents she had ever seen regarding anesthesia in any centers she had done. She wanted to carbon copy this for her colleagues to review.”

5 Billing Expertise

Billing is an ongoing pain point for many surgery centers. An Explanation of Benefits (EOB) is often confusing and stressful for patients to decipher, leaving them unsure of how to proceed. An anesthesia management partner advocates for each patient, offering transparent billing, interacting with payers as needed, and maximizing reimbursement.

CarePlus’ billing and patient education services have helped Dr. Williams address common challenges in his surgery center. CarePlus assisted him with a pamphlet for his practice that he could give to every

patient before a surgical procedure, explaining the billing process clearly and encouraging people to call the CarePlus team with any questions or concerns.

“Any time we had a billing issue or a problem related to anesthesia, we immediately called CarePlus,” said Dr. Williams. “Within about a day or two at most, I would hear back from the patient saying, ‘That was amazing. I’ve never had anybody handle that bill, or explain it to me in that way.’ They always changed a negative into a positive.”





6 Analytics & Financial Metrics

In a busy surgery center, it can be challenging for physicians and administrators to pause and step back from daily responsibilities to look at the bigger financial picture. Dr. Williams spoke about the value CarePlus provides through monthly reporting, including comparisons across all the centers CarePlus serves. In addition, they lead quarterly meetings that cover analytics, progress reports, new technology updates, and performance improvement recommendations.

In a quarterly meeting two years ago, a CarePlus executive noted that the Blue Cross numbers for Dr. Williams' center had dropped. His office hadn't

noticed it before, but they looked into it and found that Blue Cross had incorrectly designated him "out of network." This meant primary care doctors couldn't refer patients to him and the center's numbers fell significantly.

"It would have taken me probably six more months to identify the problem if it wasn't for CarePlus," said Dr. Williams. "We made a couple phone calls, identified the situation, and within a few weeks that was remedied. I owe that specific amount of gratitude to CarePlus for identifying our specific payer was down, and that saved me hundreds of thousands of dollars."





About CarePlus Anesthesia Management

CarePlus Anesthesia Management has developed a modern anesthesia model that aligns with the clinical, operational, and financial needs of surgery centers. In addition to delivering a safe and effective clinical experience, we are active team members dedicated to driving center efficiency. With physicians in complete control, CarePlus helps deliver improved outcomes and financial performance.

For more than a decade, we have been devoted to alleviating pain through anesthesia management in the ASC market. We can alleviate yours.

Learn more about CarePlus, and get in touch with our expert team.

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