



care<sup>+</sup>plus

Anesthesia Management

# Time to Make an Anesthesia Transition?

Why ASCs are switching anesthesia providers.





Over the next decade, outpatient case volumes are predicted to grow 15 percent across the U.S. and outpatient surgery is likely to see overall growth of 11 percent from 2017 to 2022.<sup>1</sup>

This growth will come from an industry wide push to deliver healthcare in an ambulatory platform which has proven to lower the cost of care and improve outcomes, and the move of higher acuity cases such as joint replacement and spinal fusions into a surgery center setting.

Taking advantage of the powerful market forces driving ambulatory surgery center (ASC) growth requires that leaders ensure their center has access to the right anesthesia specialization, structure, and service mindset that will maximize the inherent strengths in quality and efficiency that differentiate their centers. Finding an anesthesia provider that can help your center adapt to new needs is difficult, but it is a critical part of any growth strategy moving forward.

In addition to providing safe and effective service, anesthesia providers are being called upon to create value for the facility. And as ASC leaders strive to maximize the strengths of their center, they are taking a hard look at their anesthesia providers and making changes to accommodate – and accelerate – growth.

“The culture of an ASC extends well beyond quality: the culture of an ASC must account for efficiency,” says Dan Kohl, Chief Executive Officer at CarePlus. “Centers are realizing they need to change their expectations as anesthesia is the only piece of the puzzle that is not optimized around the clinical, financial, and operational needs of their facility. This fact becomes more apparent every time a provider balks at an add-on case, refuses to follow the protocols of the center, or causes a case’s cancellation due to an emergent event or lack of coverage.”

This white paper will examine the top reasons ASCs switch anesthesia providers, while taking a deeper look at three critical business needs that drive their decisions:



#### **Operational Flexibility**

Is your anesthesia team focused on increasing efficiency and eliminating cancellations?



#### **Clinical Excellence and Patient Safety**

Do your providers have the skills and service mentality needed to deliver quality care with excellence?



#### **Improved Analytics**

The deliverable of improved analytics is better control over process and outcomes. Does your team have access to the technology to measure and monitor quality and the data to empower clinical and operational improvement?



# Operational Flexibility

The primary reason ASCs switch anesthesia providers? Cancellations. Neither of the two most common anesthesia solutions are built to accommodate change. Hospital-based anesthesia groups have your center's schedule covered, but usually are not able to easily provide flexibility for add-on cases or extended hours. Independent locum tenens accepted your schedule for a reason. It works with their lifestyle. They are often unable to provide flexibility because of other personal or professional commitments. When faced with this situation, progressive ASCs look for new providers with a mindset that better matches their needs to schedule and grow case volume via extended hours, adding physicians, or expanding to new procedures.

## Is Your ASC Growing?

Ask Yourself These Questions:

- + Can you easily extend hours or accommodate add-on cases? Or does anesthesia drive your schedule?
- + Will your coverage be affected if a provider can't work unexpectedly?
- + Can your current team provide new anesthesia models?
- + Does your anesthesia provider implement processes that prevent delays and cancellations without compromising quality?
- + Does your anesthesia provider have the experience to meet your growth needs?

"Unexpected surgical cancellations are not uncommon," notes CEO Kohl. "While patient no-shows and unforeseen medical issues inevitably will occur from time-to-time, many others are 100 percent preventable, for example, an ill-prepared or unexpectedly absent anesthesia provider."

Last minute cancellations result in inefficient use of resources and take a toll on patient satisfaction, and staff morale.

"If an ASC has recurring scheduling issues or cancellations, efficiency is jeopardized, waiting lists increase, and cost of care increases," says Paul Weir, Senior Vice President of Operations and Business Development at CarePlus. "Having access to an established network of physicians and mid-level physician extenders can be a game changer, accommodating increased surgical case volume and stamping out avoidable cancellations."

**CarePlus has access to an extensive national database including more than 50,000 anesthesia providers.**

Since the database is searchable by both skills sets and scheduling preferences, it helps ASCs add bandwidth as needed: half days, an extra day per week, or even extra providers for after hours or weekend work.



# Clinical Excellence

Patient safety is always the No. 1 priority for healthcare providers, especially during surgery and sedation. Anesthesia providers owe it to patients, colleagues, and clinical leaders to not only deliver safe, high-quality patient care, but to strive for excellence, maintain compliance standards, and ensure solid working relationships.

Creating a culture of excellence begins with finding quality partners with a shared goal of taking good care of the patient. "From an anesthesia perspective, you want a partner who has the desire to serve, who recognizes their role is to take great care of patients, and who will do everything to ensure the patients are not concerned on the day of service, not worried leading up to that day, and clear on what to expect," explains Kohl.

CarePlus Clinical Director, Chris Caldwell, works with ASC clients to source locum tenens anesthesia providers with the skills and service mentality ASCs need to deliver with excellence.

"The bottom line is we're there to take care of people, and we do that by putting the right providers in place to make sure patients are well cared for and that the facility thrives," Caldwell says. "From pre-, peri-, to post-op, we want professional providers who enhance the patient experience by operating with the same tenacity as the rest of the ASC team. That may mean starting an IV, pushing a gurney, or covering a new 5 a.m. block time."

*"Surviving and thriving in today's ASC marketplace requires adaptability. Center leaders are constantly exploring the possibilities to improve and grow. Anesthesia is uniquely positioned to either help or hinder this process. CarePlus providers embrace a growth mindset and bring a sense of urgency to helping physicians and centers achieve their clinical, operational, and financial goals."*

**- Dan Kohl, CEO**

Eliminating compliance risk is foundational in achieving excellence. In addition to having talented professionals delivering quality care, there are five questions facilities should be able to answer confidently about their anesthesia provider:

- + Are updated and evolving clinical standards regularly incorporated into the facility's policies and procedures?
- + Are performance-based peer reviews utilized as evaluative clinical tools?
- + Are all policies and procedures consistent with Medicare requirements and guidelines and monitored as these standards evolve?
- + Are all policies and procedures compliant under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act?
- + Are all providers clinically experienced, with appropriate credentialing, licensing, competency, and oversight?

"Compliance is important not only for keeping your patients safe, but also for staying competitive in a crowded healthcare market," adds Caldwell.





# Improved Analytics



In an environment where even the smallest detail can help improve efficiency, performance, and decision making, data analytics and measurement are particularly useful. With growth comes a need for more sophisticated data collection and analytics, to provide ASCs with intelligence to increase case volume, eliminate backlogs, and enhance patient satisfaction.

"Staffing more than 60,000 cases per year enables our team to collect and analyze a wide range of data," Weir says. "Beyond efficiency metrics such as on time starts, we analyze data to identify necessary changes to protocols, potential need for additional training or discipline among providers, and process improvements."

Historically, reviewing performance and quality data with physicians could present challenges, but we've found that physicians welcome data and appreciate constructive conversations that include data and analytics that establish guidelines for measurable success."

The CarePlus team delivers insights on the following:

- + Payor mix
- + OR efficiency
- + Average time/case
- + Room turnover time
- + Anesthesia quality indicators
- + Anesthesia cost/case
- + Average provider cost/case
- + Quarterly Peer Review process.
- + Adverse outcomes

In addition, working across ASCs nationwide allows CarePlus to compare local performance of key metrics to a broader benchmark, and to facilitate the identification and sharing of best practices in anesthesia management.

"Leveraging data and intel can give centers a competitive advantage and help them solve problems," says CarePlus Chief Operating Officer/Compliance Officer Cassie Syme. "For instance, if certain anesthesia providers consistently have lower throughput, we can analyze that data and recommend improvements that could minimize discharge delays."

"In contrast," explains Syme, "if an OR has exemplary throughput, we'd look to our data to determine why the team is performing better, then strive to replicate that in other locations."



# Summary

Ambulatory surgery centers poised to take advantage of market growth are smart to take a hard look at the ability of their anesthesia providers to support their goals. And there may be good reasons to switch: the right anesthesia partner can contribute greatly to ASC success, while a sub-optimal fit can subvert it.

At CarePlus, we take pride in our ability to help surgery centers nationwide transition to flexible anesthesia

staffing plans that support growth. We leverage deep operational and clinical expertise to help you:

- + Keep the providers you love
- + Recruit/credential/train new providers that match your culture
- + Provide onsite clinical support during the transition
- + Support physician control and provide flexible day-to-day operations moving forward
- + Measure performance and drive process improvement



CarePlus is a national leader in anesthesia management with integrated services that include revenue cycle and staffing.

To learn more, connect with a member of the CarePlus team at **706.381.6001**

1. Sg2; Sg2 2017 Impact of Change Forecast: Finding Growth. Posted May 5, 2017; Accessed April 2, 2018: <https://www.sg2.com/health-care-intelligence-blog/2017/05/sg2-2017-impact-change-forecast-finding-growth/>

