

HEALTH IT AND THE ASC: How Leaders Can Identify the Right Solutions for Financial and Clinical Success

IDEAS THAT MATTER

- Paper-based systems make it more difficult for ASCs to expand to new surgical specialties or accommodate increased case volume.
- Cloud-based solutions are a good match for ASCs with limited IT resources.
- Flexible software solutions tailored to the ASC setting improve patient safety, the employee experience and the bottom line.

Overview

In a November 2020 webinar, Minette Reyes and Tom Marsh from Allscripts and Faith Thompson and Randy Uthe from Hendrick Medical Center discussed how digital systems can fuel positive clinical and financial outcomes for ambulatory surgery centers.

Key Takeaways

As ambulatory surgery centers grow in popularity, paper-based systems are an obstacle to scaling.

Industrywide, ASCs are seeing rapid increases in case volume. This can be attributed to:

1. **Payers.** Many procedures have shifted to the outpatient setting, such as total knee arthroplasty, cardiac catheterization and spine decompression and fusion cases.
2. **Consumers.** Patients prefer the cost and convenience of ASCs to traditional hospitals.
3. **Physicians.** Doctors prefer performing procedures in an ASC, since their time is spent more efficiently.

To stay profitable, ASCs must focus on operational efficiency. The margin for error is thin. Paper-based systems hurt efficiency because they are labor intensive and error prone. They increase regulatory risks and negatively

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affect the patient and employee experience. In addition, creating, storing and moving paper records is costly. Paper-based systems make it more difficult for ASCs to expand to new surgical specialties or accommodate increased case volume.

In the fast-paced ASC environment, teams need systems focused on efficiency.

ASCs are fundamentally different from hospitals. All ASCs run lean operations with minimal resources and many don't have an IT team. Leading ambulatory surgery centers deploy systems designed specifically for the ASC setting.

In the ASC, patient episodes of care are very short. Documents are tailored to different procedures and workflows, with an eye toward faster charting for nurses. In most cases, ASCs don't need to gather as much patient information as hospitals.

In addition, the software used in ASCs must be flexible and customizable. Some of Hendrick Medical Center's ASCs, for example, use certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) who are independent operators, instead of having anesthesiologists on staff. Allscripts enables these CRNAs to do their jobs independently, without having rigid roles or signoffs. The goal was to deploy a system that made it easier, rather than harder, for staff to be efficient.

Software solutions designed for ASCs deliver economies of scale, while improving patient safety and the patient experience.

For ASCs with limited IT resources, a cloud-based ASC solution can help tremendously since outside experts maintain the system. If staff work in multiple ASC locations, their on-the-job experience is predictable because they interact with the same software wherever they go.

ASCs that migrate from paper-based to electronic systems maximize charge capture and reduce the revenue cycle.

The Allscripts system flexibly handles charge-related workflows in the ASC. At Hendrick Medical Center, for example, ASCs charge by procedure and implant charge. As soon as implants arrive, they are entered into Allscripts with the associated charge code. All that nurses have to do during a procedure is document. The system can also accommodate generic implant charge codes, in the event that doctors want to test new products.

Migrating from a paper to an electronic system ultimately saves ASCs time and increases the likelihood of timely payer reimbursement. Charges are generated and sent to financial systems within hours of completion. One Allscripts client improved cash flow by reducing the time spent deciphering charges and billing from 30 days to 24 hours.

FIVE TIPS FOR EVALUATING POTENTIAL EHR PARTNERS

ASCs need an EHR partner that understands industry trends and offers a wide range of functionality. Here are five things to keep in mind when evaluating vendors:



Volume surge. ASC patient volumes have been up and down this year. Look for an EHR partner with a solution that will support surges in volume.



Efficiency. Lean and efficient operations must always be top of mind.



Complexity. The complexity of procedures performed in the ASC setting is increasing. The EHR must be able to accommodate these changes.



Compliance. The ability to meet increased regulatory reporting requirements is essential.



Information flow and integration. If an ASC is part of a larger health system, integration across hospitals, provider offices, and the ASC is important. Hendrick Medical Center, for example, decided as an organization that it wanted one patient, one record.

ABOUT ALLSCRIPTS

Allscripts is an industry leader with more than 30 years' experience in enabling smarter care, delivered with greater precision for healthier patients, populations and communities. Its health IT solutions help optimize clinical, financial and operational efficiencies for organizations across the globe. Helping connect people, places and data, Allscripts empowers caregivers to make better decisions and deliver better care for healthier populations.