

Case Study: Orthopedic Surgicalist Program Expands Access to Care and Delivers Coverage for General Surgery and Emergency Department



After working with Synergy Health Partners, this hospital was able to provide 24/7/365 orthopedic and other surgical services to patients in a region that has struggled with hospital closures and limited access to healthcare.

Problem Overview

Hospitals in rural communities across America are closing, leaving their patients with fewer options for healthcare. These closures put pressure on the remaining facilities in majority-rural states where patients often have to drive long distances for surgical services. In fact, for this hospital, virtually all of the state's rural population reside in Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) and Medically Underserved Areas (MUAs).

But the forward thinking hospital leadership team had a goal – to establish an orthopedic surgery program at their facility that would give the local community better access to this level of critical care. However, starting an entire hospital department from scratch is a daunting task for a hospital in any region, let alone one in rural America.

And after working with Synergy Health Partners to build, staff and manage a Surgicalist program for orthopedic surgery, it was also able to provide coverage for the hospital's general surgery and emergency departments. In the first few years of the program, this hospital team was able to realize overall volume growth of 115%.

“The Synergy team created, staffed, and implemented an orthopedic surgery program from the ground up. In addition to 115% increase in volumes, average patient satisfaction remains at above 90%.”

Solution

Hospital Leadership partnered with Synergy to create a full-time orthopedic surgery department in order to ensure 24/7/365 availability of orthopedic services, as well as general and emergency surgery. This meant providing adequate surgeon and staff coverage for the emergency department, as well as orthopedic surgery, follow-up, post-operative care, fracture services, an elective clinic, as well as all operational logistics.

The Synergy team created, staffed, and implemented an orthopedic surgery program from the ground up. This included establishing vendors, supplies, standing up a clinic, and promoting the service to the community.

Additionally, using the Surgicalist Model, Synergy sourced, recruited, and onboarded a team of three full-time Surgicalist physicians to grow the new program. Surgicalists are surgeons who are dedicated to a hospital facility and who work preset shifts covering call for private practice surgeons. Unlike temporary locums physicians, Surgicalists are part of the hospital staff and team; they serve on committees and work side-by-side with hospital administration to grow programs and improve operations.

The Surgicalist Model creates a virtuous circle helping the hospital and the surgeon achieve their goals, while ensuring patient access in their local community. It gives the Surgicalist the flexibility to work seven to 10 consecutive days per month, allowing for predictable blocks of time off. This model of work is attractive to a surgeon who wants more work-life balance, and it can attract more surgeon talent to regions of the country that are otherwise harder to recruit for.

In parallel, it reduces care conflict for the limited number of private practice surgeons in rural areas because they can go home at the end of the day and return refreshed for the next day's patients, knowing that their patients are covered with the support of the dedicated Surgicalist team.

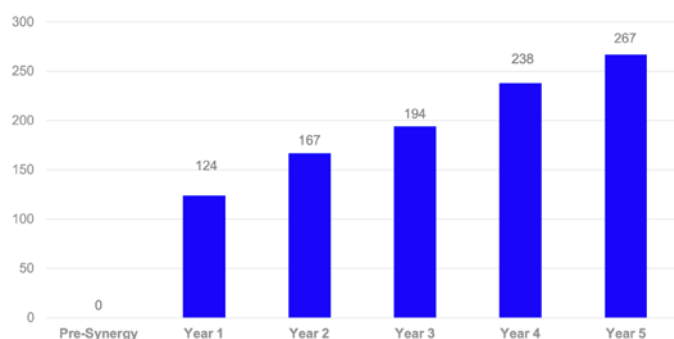


The Results

Synergy has consistently supported hospital for the past five years, and currently maintains three full-time and two part-time providers who provide orthopedic surgery, general surgery and emergency department coverage.

As a result, a well-managed program is in place, patient volume grew 115% in the first few years of the program, and average patient satisfaction remains at above 90%.

Patient Surgical Volume



Surgicalist Program with Synergy Health Partners helped established the program and enabled consistent staffing for steady volume increases.

Summary

In conclusion, the real results of this partnership between a hospital team with a goal and Synergy Health Partners demonstrates the true value of a Surgicalist program for any hospital—particularly those in rural areas—aiming to expand access to care, increase patient volumes, and maintain high levels of patient satisfaction, which generates more referred patients and a healthier bottom line.

VIRTUOUS CIRCLE SUPPORTS:

1. Program development
2. Improved facility volume
3. High patient satisfaction scores
4. 24/7 coverage and access to care in a rural community

To learn more about Synergy Health Partners and innovative Surgicalist staffing models for hospitals, visit Synergy-HP.com.

