Casetabs
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Redefining the way surgeries are coordinated

Surgery Center of South Bay

Case study overview
A four OR outpatient Ambulatory Surgery Center (ASC) located in Torrance, California, has collaborated with Casetabs, a digital healthcare company, to address the industry-wide problem of inefficient and error prone surgery coordination. After implementing Casetabs’s cloud-based surgery coordination application, Surgery Center of South Bay has saved staff time, reduced miscommunication, and increased patient satisfaction. This study provides an overview of how surgeries were coordinated before and after Casetabs, and demonstrates the impact both qualitatively and quantitatively.

Surgery Coordination Before Casetabs
Ambulatory surgery centers are focused on providing surgical services to their communities in a way that optimizes patient outcomes and cost efficiency. Since surgery centers are typically reimbursed at lower rates than hospitals for comparable surgeries, it is especially important that they are financially prudent and employ lean business processes, while delivering excellent patient care. Although many centers have put in place processes for areas such as scheduling and billing, the actual coordination of surgeries, between office staff, nurses, physicians, and vendors, is still largely done through fragmented chains of emails, text messages, phone calls, and white boards. At Surgery Center of South Bay, Business Office Manager, Pam, states, “the biggest problem in coordinating surgeries across all our departments is communication.”

In June 2015, before implementing Casetabs, coordinating just one case was a deceptively large task. Throughout the day, Tommy Valashanas, Lead Scheduler, receives phone calls from various physician offices about a potential new cases. Once a date is confirmed and required documentation is sent via fax, Tommy enters the case into their practice management system. Outside of the practice management system, Tommy then starts the process of making sure everyone that will be supporting the surgery knows precisely what people, equipment, and products need to be in the OR by the scheduled start time. First, he calls the anesthesia group to confirm they can support the case, followed by emailing the product/equipment needs to the materials manager. This triggers a fragmented chain of communication between physicians, materials managers, nurses, and vendor reps, where miscommunication can result in a delayed or canceled case. As the day of surgery gets closer, Tommy prints the schedule from the practice management system and posts it in the front office, pre-op, and OR suite. Last minute changes to the schedule can make the printed schedules worthless, and the changes must be shared via text message or word-of-mouth, which often resulted in inefficient use of staff time and frustrated physicians.

Prior to Casetabs, coordinating one surgery was a major project in itself, and the Surgery Center of South Bay has 350 surgeries each month. When Tommy was interviewed he stated, “For just one surgery, it was a challenge to make sure everyone involved with the case understood the start times, their role in the case, and received the relevant updates.” For this reason, Surgery Center of South Bay partnered with Casetabs to help build the solution, a cloud-based surgery coordination app that would become the central hub for all case communication.

“If you have access to Casetabs, there is no reason to not know exactly what’s going on at our center. It connects everyone.”
-Tommy Valashanas, Lead Scheduler

Surgery Coordination After Casetabs
In the month of September 2015, Casetabs was implemented at the Surgery Center of South Bay. Using Casetabs, every surgery has a unique case team of clinical staff, office staff, physicians, and vendors that receive real-time notification about important updates or changes to the case. After implementing this surgery coordination application, the center has experienced a reduction in overtime pay, case cancellations, and miscommunication related errors.

The Center Administrator, Julie Adelchanow, claims overtime pay has declined because, “at the end of the day, all the surgeons, reps, and anesthesiologists have automatically been updated through Casetabs regarding changes and updates to upcoming cases. This was a task that was once saved for the end of the day, and would keep staff members working late.” Casetabs has also had an impact on case cancellations because all case team members get real-time updates and access to critical case information, including date/time changes, physician comments, and customized tags like “diabetes”. Julie notes that Casetabs has helped her staff be “more diligent in capturing and inputting important case information because the process is simple and structured and they know it is shared and used by the staff, surgeons, anesthesiologists, and vendor reps.” Regarding the reduction in miscommunication related errors, Casetabs has eliminated the “telephone game”. Critical case information and updates are no longer relayed across multiple people to get to the intended recipients.

Following the initial implementation of Casetabs, Surgery Center of South Bay installed 50” digital surgery boards that are linked to Casetabs. There was one put in the waiting room, pre-op suite, and physician lounge. The digital surgery boards show all the cases for the current day, including real-time updates made by the scheduler and other authorized participants in the surgery process. After putting up the surgery boards, the paper schedules and add-on sheets were stopped, along with the need for individual text messages and emails historically sent between ASC team members. In addition, patient family inquiries into the surgery process have significantly declined and physician satisfaction has increased by having better access to the live schedule. Katie Nolan, PACU Coordinator, says the Casetabs digital surgery boards “connect our entire team. It starts with the family members in the waiting room and continues all the way throughout our center, including the pre-op, operating suite, and recovery rooms.”

The center has also noticed a dramatic reduction in the touch points required to coordinate surgeries, which has produced significant time savings for the staff and allowed them to focus more time on their patients. Today, a single case that used to involved up to 20 emails, text messages, phone calls, and whiteboard changes, now involves 30 seconds to add the case in Casetabs, and then 1-2 subsequent updates as the case date nears. The following charts demonstrate the time savings findings and return on investment.
By The Numbers... Traditional vs Casetabs

Surgery Coordination

**Surgery Center of South Bay: Key Stats**

- Specialties at Surgery Center of South Bay: Spine, Ortho, General, ENT, Podiatry, Gastro
- Size: 1 Procedure Room, 4 ORs
- Volume: 287 Cases/mo
- Location: Torrance, CA

143 **HOURS SAVED PER MONTH**

The number of front office staff (82) and nursing staff (123) hours saved per month after implementing Casetabs.

Time saved comes from a reduction in communication touch points, including text messages, emails, phone calls, and updating whiteboards.

Volume: 287 cases per month

471% **RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

Return on investment when strictly comparing achieved staff time savings against the price of Casetabs.

$3,563 **MONTHLY SAVINGS**

Monthly savings, calculated by multiplying the nursing and office staff time savings by their respective compensation rate.
It's the app that keeps tabs on your cases