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# Creating a Perioperative Partnership for Operating Room Managers

*How Anesthesia Leadership Can Help*

July 2012



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## Creating a Perioperative Partnership for Operating Room Managers

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*“When the qualities of high-performing surgical teams are examined, it is the interactive dynamics of people that shape the performance of the team.”*

**“Assessing the Performance  
of Surgical Teams”  
Health Care Management Review  
January-March 2009**

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Operating room (OR) managers play a critical role in healthcare. They endure the day-to-day challenges of managing perioperative services in an effort to create the safest, most productive, and most efficient OR. A strong perioperative partnership with anesthesia leadership lends support to OR managers so they are not alone in meeting the high demands of the position.

There are high-risk responsibilities associated with OR management that are similar to those required of airline pilots. During an investigation into commercial airline accidents, the aviation industry discovered an essential link between teamwork and performance.<sup>1</sup> Medical researchers applied lessons learned from the aviation studies to assess teamwork in the OR, and found a similar connection.<sup>2</sup>

To run smoothly, the OR requires a team of healthcare professionals working in a collaborative environment. This white paper reviews the challenges of OR management, the benefits of developing a perioperative partnership with the anesthesia team, and the key attributes that make the best anesthesia partner.

### Challenges of OR Management

OR managers and anesthesia leadership share three common goals – delivering high-quality healthcare, running the operating theatre efficiently and productively, and maximizing revenue and income while minimizing cost. A breakdown in any of the three phases of perioperative care (pre-, intra-, and postoperative) puts those goals at risk.

Three factors have significant influence over the attainment of OR management goals:

- The healthcare team
- The regulatory environment
- The quality improvement program

**Healthcare team:** Effective management of perioperative care depends on the cooperation and teamwork of the OR’s surgeons, anesthesia providers, and nurses.

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The OR team is like a three-spoked wheel. The wheel performs best when all spokes are intact and functioning properly. While the wheel may still function if one of the spokes loosens or breaks, it does not operate at peak performance. When surgeons, nurses, and the anesthesia department work as a collaborative team, it fosters a setting for peak performance.

Frequently, team members have different motivations and work styles. Long work hours, assertive personalities, and the inherent stress of the environment add to the OR manager's challenges. Without respect and an understanding of roles and responsibilities, healthcare professionals can develop territorial agendas, resulting in a breakdown in efficiencies and quality of care.

**Regulatory environment:** A major factor that impacts OR management is the increasingly complex state and federal regulatory environment, in addition to existing hospital bylaws.

Patient safety and improved outcomes have always been a priority; however, health reform initiatives, such as the Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) program, add skin to the game with performance- and outcomes-based metrics impacting compensation.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act continues a history of increasing focus on transparency, accountability, and efforts to quantify what "quality of care" means with measurable results.

The sheer volume of regulations underscores how important it is for perioperative providers to work together toward compliance and improved quality of care. A fractured team harms overall efforts, which puts the patient and the hospital at risk.

**Quality improvement program:** The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) leads many quality improvement initiatives; however, most of these programs are products of a partnership with multiple healthcare organizations.

### Examples of Quality of Care Initiatives

#### CMS

- Value-Based Purchasing (VBP) – Process of care, patient experience, and outcomes measurements
- Inpatient Prospective Payment System (IPPS) – starting with Fiscal Year 2013, a reduction in diagnosis-related group (DRG) payments helps fund VBP
- Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) – survey used in VBP program
- Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS) – incentive payments / adjustments for quality information reporting
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) – Patient safety indicators

#### The Joint Commission

- Surgical Care Improvement Project (SCIP) – inpatient quality of care measurements

#### Professional Accreditation

- Professional societies, specialties, and subspecialties

#### Hospital Bylaws