

AN OVERVIEW

- Email Addresses Collected From 96% of Patient Census.
- 68.4% Survey Response Rate.
- Quality-Focus Proves Beneficial During Joint Commission Accreditation.
- Easy To Use. Benefit-Rich.

CASE STUDY: The Ohio Surgery Center Utilizing Patient Insight to Sustain Excellence

The Ohio Surgery Center in Columbus, Ohio is a comprehensive ambulatory care facility accredited by the Joint Commission. Opened in 1998, the facility has 5 operating suites where 28 credentialed doctors and 45 additional staff members tend to over 7,000 patients annually.

Identifying An Opportunity

The Ohio Surgery Center found themselves in a situation common to Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASCs) everywhere: finding a solution to provide more detailed patient feedback and insight. While many healthcare entities choose to remain status quo with a 35% survey return rate while consistently scoring between 99 and 100, Ohio Surgery Center leadership wanted more. They were less interested about 'score' and more interested in learning as much as possible from their patients.

They recognized the ability to use this insight as actionable data to achieve and sustain the highest levels of excellence possible. Their perception (later confirmed to be accurate) was that overall they were doing great. As industry leaders they sought to learn more about each patient's experience and from as many patients as possible. They chose to set their internal bar at nothing short of excellence.

In 2007 their patient survey process revolved around a 15 statement paper-based survey. Patients were limited with responding 'agree' or 'disagree' to these statements. An extremely labor-intensive process was particularly draining to their quality management RN, who spent several hours aggregating data to report various trends and metrics. Their paper-based surveying provided limited feedback. The survey return was subject to the time delay or lag associated with standard mail.

Selecting A Better Solution

A brief discussion with SourceMedical account manager, Chris Finelli, provided awareness of a better approach - SourcePlus EdgeSurvey, an electronic-based patient satisfaction surveying

and benchmarking tool. High expectations were set by business partner CTQ Solutions. By collecting email addresses, the Ohio Surgery Center patients would receive an invitation in a personalized email. The targeted capture was a 50-65% patient response rate where surveys would be returned within days of the visit.

Electronic Surveying: The Ohio Surgery Center was told that a critical success factor beyond capturing the patient's email address, was to explain to each patient the importance of receiving their feedback. They not only requested the patient's email address at registration, but also requested it during the discharge process if the patient had not previously provided it.

For those skeptical of being able to procure email addresses, the Ohio Surgery Center illustrates that proper communication works. With approximately 600 cases per month, the surgery center has been able to collect email addresses from as many as 96% of their patients. To close the loop, they remind their patients during their follow-up call to complete their survey.

Meeting Response Expectations: The Ohio Surgery Center's average response rate increased to an average of 56% (up from 35%) with a response rate as high as 68.4%. This increase coincided with lengthening their survey by adding 7 more statements, along with key indicators, additional comment sections and free form questions that allow patients to share more about their experience.



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Suzi Walton
Business Office Manager

Insight Gained – Quality Intelligence:

The Ohio Surgery Center is able to view completed surveys in real time. In addition, any surveys noting dissatisfaction prompt an 'Alert'. These surveys are referred to separately, in an Alert management section, within their client portal for easy identification. Upon reviewing the 'Alerted' survey, if it is determined that follow-up is warranted, the Ohio Surgery Center has the opportunity to assign specific staff to be accountable for follow-up.

“The ability to categorize patient issues in QI (Quality Intelligence) will be extremely helpful in facilitating this year's primary IOP Initiative”, notes Center Administrator Kim Esteph, RN, BSN. “Through the use of QI, we will be able to capture process improvement opportunity through online collaboration. This removes the burden of tracking process improvement manually while ensuring centralization, clarity and accessibility to key data points.”

Each Quality Intelligence Record allows for categorization, severity and escalation in addition to freeform notation. Leadership may report on Quality Intelligence data on-demand for any time period. Various attribute designations provide flexible reporting capabilities – standard with EdgeSurvey.

Standard Reporting: Performance Analysis reports are received immediately following the end of the month, and a quarterly report is a bonus that arrives following the end of each calendar quarter. Each report includes an Executive Summary, Scoring Analysis (with National Peer Benchmarking and Ranking), Trend Analysis, Response Summary, Critical-to-Improvement Analysis and neatly categorized Comment Sections. The report also provides scores and comments delineated by each provider.

Making the Data Actionable: The Ohio Surgery Center chose to use the data for more than just surveying and monitoring scores. They reallocated staff time from data aggregation to proactive information-based decision-making. They immediately applied this to (1) IOP projects; (2) budgeting; and (3) long-term and short-term strategic planning. They used the drill-down capabilities to determine if additional unique questions should be infused to measure process- and quality-improvement initiatives identified internally.

Value For Joint Commission

Accreditation: During their recent accreditation survey with the Joint Commission, the Ohio Surgery Center found that EdgeSurvey provided even more value. While meeting the standard criteria of surveying patients and having peer benchmarking, their Quality Intelligence reports illustrated clear evidence of the extent to which they went above and beyond with patient issue resolution.

The Joint Commission spent a lot of time reviewing their EdgeSurvey data. They liked that the Ohio Surgery Center had the flexibility to initially customize their questions and make them center- and population-specific. “The Joint Commission suggested we have a way to 'ad-hoc in' pertinent questions 'on the fly' for refining and measuring process ideas.” said Suzi Walton, Business Office Manager. “EdgeSurvey helped us accommodate this. For example, The Joint Commission wants patients to be more actively involved in their care and we tweaked our patient care question to address this.”

Facilitating Communication: EdgeSurvey data is used throughout the facility. Data is shared with patients, staff and physicians. A bulletin board display is visible in the lobby with quotes taken from surveys for patients to read while they are waiting.

The results from the survey are actively shared with staff members and are reported in the lounge. Besides raising awareness of satisfaction opportunities, the feedback is also used to reinforce the positive behavior that leads to success.

Other Benefits: The Ohio Surgery Center also surveys their employees and physicians annually. They take the insight gained from these internal surveys, combined with the feedback from the patient surveys, as input into their annual budgets. The data has also been instrumental in their IOP.

Cost Savings: With respect to cost savings, they appreciate that their fees are based only on completed surveys. They have eliminated the need for their business return postal account. The valuable time for their QM coordinator has been completely reallocated.

Seeing Results

The Ohio Surgery Center is in its third year using EdgeSurvey. They were recognized by CTQ Solutions as recipients of the Inaugural Apex Quality Award. As 1 of 22 surgery centers nationally to receive this distinction, they met several criteria that illustrated their excellence in provision of patient care and quality of service.

Next Steps

The Ohio Surgery Center continues to excel in all facets of this process. They continue to use insight from their employees and physicians to better understand 'how they are doing'. Most important they make the effort to capture feedback from as many patients as possible, always willing to listen to the feedback with an open mind. If there is an opportunity to learn and make improvements, they pursue it, and they continue to invest in the satisfaction of their patients.