



case study

Extending the Care Continuum with Integrated Emergency Medicine and Orthopedic Surgery

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Healthcare facilities face many barriers to continuity of specialty care. Difficult coordination and fractured continuums often place unnecessary burdens on hospital administration to get involved in day-to-day clinical operations. These issues are often exacerbated at community hospitals, where a struggle to cover acute specialty care may already exist. In contrast, facilities implementing integrated services reap the benefits of around-the-clock presence and increased teamwork, particularly in acute emergency and surgical care.

At a 249-bed community hospital in Connecticut, TeamHealth provides integrated emergency medicine and orthopedic surgery services. The value of integrating these two service lines is vital to the health of the facility.

INTEGRATED SERVICES BENEFIT FACILITIES

Integration benefits the facility by allowing hospital leadership freedom from involvement in daily clinical operations. As we know, healthcare facilities are complex businesses that have varied needs and strategic areas of focus. Too often, leadership is mired in time-consuming and burdensome interventions among clinical departments. In the case of emergency departments and surgery, this can often come in the form of coordinating

case hand-offs. However, having these departments on the same team eliminates these challenges.

Quick, efficient communication is key when addressing acute orthopedic cases coming through the emergency department. While call specialists may struggle to respond promptly, often due to over-extended schedules or trouble with communication, an integrated team can always be reached. With team members across departments, clinicians – and patients – can feel peace of mind knowing acute specialty care is merely an in-facility phone call away.

Finally, some of the most valuable benefits to facilities are the sharp focus and improvements in quality metrics we see with integrated services. Particularly, integrated teams can greatly impact hospital throughput. Not only does this reflect on the facility's overall quality scores, but it also allows for constant improvement without hospital intervention. Working on the same team means we share data ranging from the individual clinician to our national averages. This helps us identify areas for improvement regardless of the service line and allows for immediate buy-in from our other integrated services if performance improvements are needed.



INTEGRATED SERVICES BENEFIT PATIENTS

Ultimately, our goal is to provide patients with the best care possible. This remains the axis of all we do. Integration not only bolsters patient care, but it also enhances patient experience. Particularly with emergency medicine and orthopedic surgery integration, we look mostly to trauma patients, who are often experiencing some of their most difficult days. One of our jobs is to ease the worry of these patients, and we are able to do so at a base level when we improve the transitions of care for them.

We work closely together during transitions of care from a moderate sedation joint reduction to a complex fracture reduction splinting. Regardless of the case, our strong relationships and established lines of communication allow us to provide quality care without any hurdles. This not only provides seamless transitions for patients but also helps us better coordinate their care.

Integration also allows us to extend the continuum of care. After-care and close follow-ups are more attainable and consistent when there is active communication among teams. While this is certainly possible and necessary no matter the departments, integration makes this process easier. Patients feel this in the level of care they receive and in the experience they have.



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The tangible changes we have enacted as a result of our emergency medicine and orthopedic surgery line integration have a direct impact on patient care. At the facility, we have seen great improvements in care reflected in the quality metrics we track. Notably, we have made strides in patient transfers. With the presence of in-house orthopedic surgical support, we have decreased the number of transfers from our hospital to tertiary facilities for orthopedic care. When transfers are necessary, we can identify them in real-time and assess cases collaboratively through our integrated approach. Furthermore, we have been able to stabilize key metrics associated with compliance, patient safety and discharge. These positive and sustained results boost patient care and experience.



THE TEAMHEALTH DIFFERENCE

TeamHealth's long-standing emergency medicine program provides facilities with vast knowledge, experience and resources to elevate the care patients receive. Our orthopedic program draws on this success and enhances peace of mind and quality with a 24/7 presence of specialty care in our partner facilities across the country. When these services are integrated, the TeamHealth difference is even more pronounced. To find out more about how our services can elevate your facility's performance and improve care for your patients, [please reach out to us](#).

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