

Ambulatory Surgery Center

FACT SHEET

Why are ASCs So Popular?

Safety!

- Like hospitals, virtually all states require ASCs to become licensed to operate. The vast majority of ASCs undergo stringent licensure, certification, accreditation reviews, & many of the same standards as hospitals, including rigorous inspection & reporting requirements.
- Additionally, Medicare must certify all ASCs that furnish services to Medicare beneficiaries; which means that the ASC must comply with specified physical plant, staffing, safety and governance standards, among other things, and must demonstrate continued compliance with these standards.

Service!

- Patient satisfaction surveys show that patients and their families consistently report a higher degree of satisfaction with ASCs.
- ASCs are able to improve efficiencies, which minimizes patient waiting times.
- ASCs offer superior outcomes, in part because of staff specialization.
- ASCs are more patient-focused, and strive for 100% patient satisfaction.

Lower Cost!

- ASCs most often offer a lower cost alternative to surgery.
- ASCs are more affordable for patients. According to the Medicare Payment Advisory Commission, Medicare payments to ASCs are lower than payments to hospitals for comparable services for 87 percent of procedures. Additionally, patients pay less coinsurance in the ASC environment—as much as 61%, or over \$300 compared to their out of pocket coinsurance for the same procedure in the hospital.
- ASCs are also more affordable for payors. Studies have shown that Medicare saves almost half a billion dollars per year by utilizing ASCs instead of hospital outpatient departments. Private insurance companies tend to save similarly, which means that employers also incur lower health care costs. Employers & insurers, particularly managed care entities, are driving up ASC growth, because they recognize the efficiencies and savings inherent in ASC settings. This growth will result in additional savings to patients as well.

Technology!

- ASC growth has coincided with the pace of technological advancement, which makes it more practical to perform a growing range of procedures in ASCs. Procedures that, only a few years ago, required major incisions, deep sedation and extended convalescence, can now be done through closed techniques, conscious sedation, and minimal recovery time. As medical innovation continues to advance, more procedures will be suitable for the ASC setting.

Physicians!

- Historically, physicians led the development of ASCs because they were able to tailor surgical suites to their specialty and operating style. They were able to schedule procedures more conveniently for patients and themselves. They were able to assemble a team of specially trained and highly skilled nurses and assistants, which resulted in increased productivity and decreased costs. Today, physicians have an ownership interest in virtually all (83%) of ASCs.
- The number of Medicare-certified ASCs grew from just over 400 in 1983 to more than 3,300 in 2001 according to Medicare claims data.

The one outstanding reason ASCs are so popular, is that patients tend to find ASCs to be friendlier environments, and prefer the convenience and efficiency offered by most ASCs.