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## Orthopedic Professionals Look to Accreditation to Upgrade Patient Safety

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GURNEE, III. -- As increasing numbers of orthopedic surgeons establish outpatient surgical facilities, they are enhancing their commitment to deliver superior patient care by seeking accreditation for the facility through the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgical Facilities (AAAASF). AAAASF has been accrediting surgical facilities since 1983.

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"Accreditation is a valuable tool to help orthopedic surgeons elevate the level of patient safety and quality of care that they provide," said Ramon Jimenez, M.D., a Salinas, California-based orthopedic surgeon who has been elected to the AAAASF Board. "Accredited orthopedic practices send a strong message to patients and general consumers that they meet high safety and quality standards. In fact, accreditation gives organizations a valuable competitive edge and helps streamline Medicare certification."

To become AAAASF-accredited, each facility is rigorously inspected and evaluated by AAAASF to ensure that it meets their standards of excellence. After accreditation is achieved, the facility is required to perform an annual in-house evaluation to identify any areas that may need improvement. Subsequently, every three years a formal on-site inspection is performed by a qualified AAAASF physician inspector.

AAAASF accreditation is based on the type of anesthesia administered in the facility and the corresponding standards necessary to ensure patient safety for each classification.

Orthopedic surgical practices must meet a series of nationally recognized standards that are verified by an on-site inspection by a qualified physician inspector. AAAASF standards are designed to ensure verifiable quality care with specific requirements. Facilities must meet standards in the following categories: General Environment, Operating Room Environment, Policy & Procedures, Recovery Room Environment, Policy & Procedures, and General Safety in the Facility, Blood and Medications, Medical Records, Quality Assessment/Quality Improvement, Personnel, Governance, Anesthesia.

Furthermore to become accredited, a facility must meet the following requirements: The Medical Director must be currently licensed by the state, and must be either an ABMS board-certified physician or a board-certified anesthesiologist.

In addition, the Medical Director must be board certified and practicing in the same surgical specialty and be actively involved in the routine direction and management of the facility. In addition, every physician



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operating in an AAAASF accredited facility, whether the facility is multi-specialty, group practice, or a single physician facility, must hold, or must demonstrate that they have held, valid and unrestricted hospital privileges (or core privileges) in their specialty at a duly accredited and/or licensed acute care hospital within 30 minutes of the accredited facility for all procedures that are performed within the accredited facility. Only procedures covered by those hospital privileges may be performed within the AAAASF accredited facility and a physician must be present when anesthesia is being administered.

The AAAASF is a major proponent for peer review reporting and quality improvement in the outpatient surgery environment. It is the mission of AAAASF to develop and implement standards of excellence to ensure the highest quality of patient care through an accreditation program that serves both the medical community and the public interest.

Source: AAAASF



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