

Emerging Spinecare Trends

Spinecare Facilities (Centers of Excellence)

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Spinecare is currently delivered through many settings such as standalone practices, group practices, multidisciplinary supergroups, and as part of hospital or large healthcare systems. In the future we will see less isolated spinecare practitioners. There will be greater integration and collaboration between practitioners and facilities. The majority of successful spine physicians and specialists will join forces as part of multidisciplinary spinecare centers of excellence. Some of this will be facilitated by hospitals and large corporate healthcare systems hoping to expand their market reach. Other groups will be developed by likeminded practitioners. The integrated spinecare program/system can offer more services and allow for staff members to specialize and refine their skills which will have a positive impact on treatment outcome. This results in a group comprised of highly specialized and skilled practitioners. This attracts patients and referrals from a larger geographic area thus taking patients from less efficient and less capable practitioners and/or facilities.

Larger spinecare facilities can afford to invest in leading-edge technology and can offer staff greater opportunities and benefits. They are also able to hire more qualified ancillary staff members thus freeing up spine physicians to focus on their areas of expertise or interest. Larger facilities also have greater negotiating power with third party payers. Integrated spinecare programs provide more efficient and comprehensive spinecare. They also have the tools to objectify treatment outcome and meet the growing demands for evidence-based care from patients and/or third party payers. This successful trend has become prevalent in the fields of orthopedics and cardiology.

The future healthcare delivery system will place even greater demands on spine physicians and specialists to provide quality care, while utilizing approaches which are cost efficient and effective. The restraints of dwindling revenues and advances in spinecare technology will further drive the development of niche programs and/or centers of excellence. Spine practitioners will have to collaborate or partner with healthcare systems and facilities to insure that adequate levels of reimbursement/profit are received. Spine physicians and specialists will have to become part of delivery systems that promote accountability, savings and state-of-the-art care.

The spinecare field is rapidly evolving. The emerging trend favors the development of large multidisciplinary spinecare centers of excellence. Some large established centers will develop satellite locations which will feed into the primary location. The international community is becoming more educated about the difference in the level of care between facilities not only within their own region or country but abroad. With the ability to access information about facilities anywhere in the world the public is more willing and able to travel to receive optimum spinecare. This trend will have an adverse impact on small spinecare centers and communities that do not have integrated centers of excellence.

In the multidisciplinary spinecare setting, well-defined clinical algorithms and guidelines will be used to deliver more standardized care. Improved documentation and objective outcome measures will be used to support treatment decisions. A practice continuum will be implemented to prioritize the most conservative treatment options. Failure at a conservative level of care will be required

prior to advancing to the next more aggressive treatment option. The ultimate goal will be to offer the most conservative level of care for the greatest gain. Healthcare disciplines will be integrated in a manner that facilitates a seamless continuum of cost efficient spinecare. The multi-disciplinary approach will ensure a comprehensive approach and lead to high patient satisfaction.