

Administrators earn CASC designation

Administrators from two Symbion surgery centers have joined an elite group of professionals who have obtained the designation of Certified Administrator Surgery Center (CASC).

Congratulations to David Gross, administrator of Surgery Center of Duncanville in Duncanville, Texas, and Linda Simmons, administrator of The Surgery Center in Columbus, Georgia, who obtained the designation after completing an exam that covers a variety of topics including patient care, quality management, human resources, financial development, and regulatory and legal issues.

CASC designation is the only credential designed specifically for ASC administrators. For more information, please visit www.aboutcasc.org.

We want to hear from you!

Have you found a better way
... to solve a common problem?
... to hold down costs?
... to improve a process or raise the
quality of care?

If so, we want to hear from you! Please email Donna St. Louis at dstlouis@symbion.com with a short description of your problem and how you solved it. The best submissions will be featured in upcoming issues of *Symbion Connection* and winners will receive a \$50 gift certificate to Outback Steakhouse.

SHORTCUTS

Symbion welcomes new centers, expands others

Welcome to the employees and physicians associated with **Cypress Surgery Center** in Wichita, Kansas. In March, Symbion acquired a majority interest in the multi-specialty center, which serves patients throughout 49 counties in southern Kansas. The Surgery Center was recently named one of the "Best Places to Work" by the *Wichita Business Journal* for the second year in a row.

Cape Coral Ambulatory Surgery Center has joined Symbion's network of Florida centers. Located in Cape Coral, Fla., the multi-specialty, de novo center opened its doors earlier this year.

In other news, Missouri-based Surgery Center of Kirkwood has a new location and a new name – **Timberlake Surgery Center**. The multi-specialty center moved to a new, 12,000 square foot facility in the city of Chesterfield earlier this year. Congratulations to Jim Ray and his staff for the smooth transition from their old location to the beautiful new center.

Finally, congratulations to the employees and physicians associated with **Birmingham Surgery Center**, formally Birmingham Endoscopy Center. Thanks to the hard work of staff, patient care continued uninterrupted during renovations, which were completed in March.

"There were times when construction was going on above, below, and all around the Endo Center, but amid the work, Martha Ott and her staff kept the center in operation. They deserve a lot of credit for their efforts," said Taylor Morris, VP Facility Development.

The multi-phased project expanded the original 11,000 square foot doctor's clinic and Endoscopy Treatment Center to a modern 16,000 square foot, six operating room, two-procedure room multi-specialty center.



Timberlake Surgery Center



Birmingham Surgery Center

CEO'S CORNER:

DEAR COLLEAGUES:



Richard E. Francis, Jr.
Chairman &
Chief Executive Officer

Twenty years ago, no one would have imagined complicated procedures like total knee and shoulder replacements or laparoscopic banding could be performed in a surgery center. Yet today, many of our facilities are among the first to offer patients the convenience and value associated with having these surgeries on an outpatient basis.

As advances in technology continue to change the landscape of medicine, Symbion will strive to bring them to our patients first. During the year ahead, we will continue working with our physician partners to offer these and other innovative procedures in our centers – allowing patients a shorter stay and a faster recovery. As centers become proficient in new procedures, we are committed to sharing that information with physicians and other healthcare professionals at other facilities in our network so they can offer similar expertise in their own centers.

As part of this commitment to innovation, we recently established a committee dedicated to identifying new technology and services. The group, which is made up of representatives from the home office and our centers, evaluates how we can use technology to improve the overall experience for our patients and physician partners.

Innovations come in many shapes and sizes. Whether it's a new procedure, new medical equipment or just a better way to meet our customers' needs, I encourage each of you to find ways we can enhance the services we offer.

As always, thank you for your hard work and dedication to Symbion and those we serve.

Sincerely,

Richard E. Francis, Jr.
Chairman & Chief Executive Officer

MEDICAL DIRECTORS MEET TO SHARE INFORMATION

More than 60 surgeons from across the country gathered in sunny Scottsdale, Ariz., at Symbion's annual medical directors meeting in February. With more than 90 percent of the company's surgical centers represented, the conference provided physicians with the opportunity to share information and discuss best practices.



(L-R) Dr. and Mrs. Carey Windler, Central Park Surgery Center; Dr. Lou Adams, Memphis Surgery Center. Standing: Betty Distefino Symbion Executive Assistant, and meeting coordinator.

Topics presented at the meeting included increasing OR efficiencies and developing new procedures such as hemiarthroplasty, a spine program and lap banding. Presentations were made by David Lensch, M.D. and David Esposito, M.D., Wilmington Surgery Center; Mark Sherrod, M.D., and George Tipton, M.D., Central Park Surgery Center; Richard Jones, M.D., Asheville Surgery Center; and John Kagan, M.D., Lee Island Coast Surgery Center.

Symbion's Quality Council, which meets up to four times a year to review information on corporate benchmark data and other clinical topics, evaluate common issues and make policy recommendations as needed, presented several ideas to the medical directors during the meeting. Despite all that was accomplished, the event wasn't all work and no play. Physicians and attendees enjoyed mountain biking and golf and networked with their peers.



(L-R) Jeannie Cord, Dr. Stephen Cord, Laurie Hallier, Dr. Stephen Hallier of Lubbock, Texas.

Help and Healing in Honduras

Less than 1,000 miles separate the Central American country of Honduras from the United States but, in some respects, it is a world away.

The differences between these worlds are startling”, says Scott Spore, M.D., a urologist from NorthStar Surgical Center in Lubbock, Texas. Dr. Spore and a group of medical professionals recently traveled to Honduras to provide care to those in need as part of a mission trip sponsored by their church. Here is a snapshot of their weeklong, life-changing journey as told by Dr. Spore.



The group treats patients at a makeshift clinic.

Making a dent

The first two days were spent at a hospital in Olanchito where the team treated more than 80 patients. Most of them had general medical needs, but several sought help for more complex conditions such as cancer and urological problems.



Dr. Spore sets up his roadside clinic from the back of a van.

I met a man who had been living with a tube inserted in his bladder for nine years. He really needed surgery. I could have helped him, but I didn't have the right equipment. It's a helpless feeling. Medical care is so far behind what we have in the United States. You feel like you are just treating the temporary – you can't make a dent in the medical care needs in just a week. That is frustrating. The way I looked at it was that, if nothing else, the thing I could do was show them love.

Roadside clinic

One morning the group ran a general medical clinic for pastors and their families attending a pastor's conference. This time, approximately 80 people's medical needs were met in just one day, making for a very long, but fruitful day.

Everyone was so thankful we were there and so grateful [to receive care]. Once we finished at the conference, we went up to the village where the rest of our group was working. We ran a clinic out of the back of a van for the local villagers. We had tables and chairs brought out, and we set up on the side of the road. This time, we treated the aches and pains of about 30 patients.

The men's last day was spent in the poor town of Bethany. They set up a general medicine clinic in a church, and they helped more than 100 individuals who came for medical attention.

We helped as many as we could but quickly realized that the need was greater than the workers. We gave out a lot of medicines. After a trip like this, you really appreciate what we have here in the United States. People like to complain about things like health care here, but I say, come with me to Honduras and I'll show you what it could be like.

Profile of a leader: Lynne Oliver

Lynne Oliver knows the importance of getting involved. As administrator of Bellingham Surgery Center in Bellingham, Washington, since 1995, she's seen many issues affecting ambulatory surgery centers come and go.



Though change is often a slow process, she feels it's well worth the effort.

"It's easy to forget that so many people who have the power to make decisions that affect our business don't really understand it," she says. "It's our job to educate them about surgery centers and help them see the benefits we bring to both patients and payors."

This point was driven home last year when she joined colleagues from the Freestanding Ambulatory Surgery Center Association of Washington State (FASCAWS) to participate with the Federated Ambulatory Surgery Association (FASA) in the National Conference of State Legislatures, which was held in Seattle.

The event brought policymakers from around the country together to discuss common issues and provided an opportunity for organizations like FASA and FASCAWS to raise awareness and promote their mission.

"We met legislators who had never even heard of surgery centers," she recalls. "While I knew that ASCs were not on everyone's radar, it was eye opening that so many legislators seemed completely unaware we exist. We were able to do some good by introducing them to the concept and educating them about why it's a viable alternative for many patients."

"It's our job to educate them about surgery centers and help them see the benefits we bring to both patients and payors."

Oliver has been involved with FASCAWS for more than 15 years and currently serves as treasurer. In addition to raising awareness of surgery centers, Oliver has lobbied regulators on issues ranging from reimbursement methodology and fee schedules to data collection through her involvement with the group.

Oliver says that both FASCAWS, the state association, and FASA, a national association, give her the opportunity to collaborate with other centers to affect change – even if it's a little at a time.

"You have to remember surgery centers have only been around since the 1970s, so we have a lot of catching up to do. We've already seen great progress in the last few years," she says. "If you don't speak up, change will happen without you so it's important to stay informed and express your concerns."

Symbion joins the fight for increased access, better reimbursement



(L-R) Donna St. Louis and Mike Guarino of Symbion flank Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID), one of the sponsors of new legislation that would help surgery centers.

Earlier this year, Symbion joined other ambulatory surgical centers from around the country in Washington D.C. to lobby for improved patient access and more favorable reimbursements during a two-day legislative seminar sponsored by the Federated Ambulatory Surgery Association (FASA).

During the event, Symbion representatives met with elected officials from the House and the Senate to discuss HR 4042, also known as the Ambulatory Surgical Center Medicare Payment Modernization Act of 2005.

If passed, the legislation would change the reimbursement methodology for ASCs and allow additional procedures to be performed in a surgery center setting. The bill would also broaden choice for thousands of Medicare participants by allowing them to undergo certain procedures in ASCs.

Representing Symbion at the conference were Sarah Martin, regional vice president, Pat Carlson, administrator of Dry Creek Surgery Center in Englewood, Colo., Cassandra Speier, regional vice president, and Kerry Allen, administrator of Union City Surgery Center in Union City, Tenn.

The Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC) will hold its legislative seminar in Washington, D.C. on June 5 – 6. For more information on how you can get involved, go to www.aaasc.org or www.fasa.org.