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## **ASCAC Addresses Study Findings on ASCs and Physician Ownership**

**Washington, D.C., August 18, 2010** – The Ambulatory Surgery Center Advocacy Committee (ASCAC) raised concerns today about findings from a study published in the August issue of the *Archives of Surgery*, which was underwritten by the Idaho Hospital Association. The study examines the perceived effects of physician ownership in specialty hospitals and ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) in driving frequency of outpatient orthopedic surgery.

The study inaccurately suggests that physician ownership of ASCs influences physician self-referral and increases the frequency of surgical procedures. Using data from only the state of Idaho, the study author analyzed the frequency of just three orthopedic surgeries: carpal tunnel repair, arthroscopic surgery of the knee and rotator cuff repair, without consideration for standard treatment protocol and medical necessity for these procedures.

“The conclusions drawn by the author of the study are unfounded and not reflective of the breadth and scope of important surgical services provided in the more than 5,300 Medicare-certified ASCs across the country,” said Andrew Hayek, Chair of the Ambulatory Surgery Center Advocacy Committee and President and Chief Executive Officer of Surgical Care Affiliates.

The data does not include surgical procedures that are widely regarded as under-utilized, such as colonoscopies and other cancer screenings. ASCs fulfill an important role in providing patients with access to these vital preventive services.

“We have documented an increase in the number of surgical procedures performed in ASCs due to a variety of positive factors, including the transition of procedures and services from outpatient facilities to the less-costly ASC setting as well as patient preference and cost savings,” added Hayek. “Any assertion made by the author that the surgeries performed were not medically necessary is not supported by the data.”

In 2009, a [report from KNG Health Consulting](#) found that 70 percent of ASC volume growth between 2000 and 2007 was due to migration from hospitals to ASCs. Research also shows that savings translate to an estimated 50 percent reduction in out-of-pocket costs for patients and, overall, can produce approximately 40 percent in annual savings to Medicare.

As the study authors noted, there are many benefits of physician ownership, including proficient use of the facility, better control of scheduling and an environment conducive to the patient’s needs, as well as adaptable and innovative strategies for governance, leadership, and quality initiatives. Additionally, patients often prefer the ASC setting for their convenient locations, ease

of scheduling, shorter waiting times and faster recovery times. In fact, patients report a 92 percent satisfaction rate after having a procedure at an ASC.

“Since ASC physicians and staff are highly-trained and specialized, we can perform more surgeries with superior patient outcomes and high patient satisfaction that often lead to more patient referrals, factors not addressed in the study,” said David Shapiro, M.D., Chair of the Ambulatory Surgery Center Association and a Partner at the Ambulatory Surgery Company. “These advantages can lead to a higher volume of surgeries performed in the ASC setting. Our number one priority is to provide the highest quality care and medical expertise to our patients.”

The ASCAC and its partners are dedicated to working with physicians, hospitals, policymakers and other health care stakeholders to ensure that ASCs continue their commitment to excellence in quality and outcomes so that patients have the access they need to important surgical services.

#### **About the Ambulatory Surgery Center Advocacy Committee**

The Ambulatory Surgery Center Advocacy Committee (ASCAC) is working on behalf of the industry to raise awareness of the important role that ASCs play in the health care system and the high-quality, cost-effective care that ASCs provide. The ASCAC includes the national and state ASC associations as well as representatives of all types of ASC operators and physicians. For more information about ASCs, visit [www.advancingsurgicalcare.com](http://www.advancingsurgicalcare.com).

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