



Media Contact:

Christina Plourde

(202) 587-2596

cplourde@spectrumsience.com

The ASC Industry Announces Support for a Value-based Purchasing Program that Recognizes Quality Care, Promotes Efficiency and Increases Transparency in Health Care Delivery

Industry Leaders Provide Recommendations to HHS for Program Implementation

Washington, D.C., August 3, 2010 – Today, the Ambulatory Surgery Center Advocacy Committee (ASCAC) and the Ambulatory Surgery Center Association (ASCA) submitted comments regarding a value-based purchasing (VBP) program for ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) in a letter to Secretary Kathleen Sebelius at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in preparation for a report to Congress from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) on this issue. A provision in the recently passed healthcare reform law asks CMS to consult with stakeholders and submit a report to Congress with recommendations for development of a VBP program for ASCs, which would reward healthcare providers and facilities that are achieving quality performance and demonstrating quality improvements in the care they provide.

“As an industry, ASCs are committed to providing the highest quality care in the safest and most cost-effective setting possible,” said Andrew Hayek, Chairman of the ASCAC and President and CEO of Surgical Care Affiliates. “As such, ASCs support a program that would create competition based on quality and efficiency, drive improvement in care, recognize the highest quality and most efficient facilities, and improve transparency across all outpatient surgery providers including ASCs and hospital outpatient departments (HOPDs).”

Implementing a VBP program would tie annual Medicare payment updates to performance and reward ASCs that meet or exceed national standards of care as well as those that close the gap between their past performance and the current standards. Later phases of VBP could allow ASCs and HOPDs to compete across outpatient settings for rewards for providing greater value to Medicare beneficiaries and savings to the Medicare program.

“Creating a VBP program will encourage ASCs to continue providing high quality care to patients throughout the country and improve efficiencies across outpatient settings and within the Medicare program,” added Hayek.

The ASC industry recommends that progress toward implementation of a comprehensive Medicare VBP program across outpatient settings should be incremental, beginning with the development of a reliable, voluntary quality reporting infrastructure specific to ASCs that would enable performance to be measured within the ASC setting. Following successful implementation of an ASC-specific infrastructure, CMS should expand the program to enable quality and cost comparisons for outpatient surgery across multiple health settings including ASCs and HOPDs incorporating appropriate measures applicable to both.

Many ASCs already employ standards of care that enhance quality, ensure patient safety, achieve positive patient outcomes, and provide a valuable patient experience. As an independent industry initiative, the ASCQC has developed indicators to measure process and patient outcomes, some of which have been endorsed by the National Quality Forum (NQF). These include patient safety indicators and hospital

transfers. The VBP system for ASCs should be based on quality measurements which capture many aspects of ASC patient service including processes, efficiency, outcomes, and patient experience.

“According to our data, ASCs achieve excellent outcomes for patients and high levels of patient satisfaction,” said David Shapiro M.D., Chair of the Ambulatory Surgery Center Association and a Partner at the Ambulatory Surgery Company. “As an industry, we support the adoption of additional quality measures, which can be applied across a wide range of outpatient surgical facilities.”

The ASC industry also supports a VBP that would publically disclose data on the quality of care and cost to payors, which would increase the transparency of Medicare rates, patients' out-of-pocket costs, quality of surgeries and procedures and make public other useful information such as facility accreditation status, state licensure and Medicare certification. Increasing transparency would allow consumers to directly compare cost and quality measures within the industry and across multiple health care settings allowing patients to make more informed decisions about where to receive their care.

“VBP will help to demonstrate the quality and value of ASC services and encourage the continued, appropriate migration of services to the lower-priced setting,” Hayek added.

The comments were submitted to HHS by the ASC Advocacy Committee, a joint effort of the ASC Coalition and the ASC Association; and the ASC Quality Collaboration, a cooperative effort of organizations and companies interested in ensuring ASC quality data is appropriately developed and reported. These organizations include single- and multi-specialty ASCs; physician-owned ASCs, joint ventures between hospitals and physicians, and joint ventures between physicians and management companies; professional societies; and accrediting bodies. Participating ASCs range from the very small to the very large and are located in all 50 states.

To read the full comment letter to Secretary Sebelius, click [here](#).

About the Ambulatory Surgery Center Advocacy Committee

Ambulatory Surgery Centers are health care facilities that specialize in providing important surgical and preventive services in an outpatient setting. With approximately 5,300 Medicare-certified facilities throughout the country, ASCs perform more than 25 million surgeries per year. The Ambulatory Surgery Center Advocacy Committee 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.