

Attachment 1. Sample Newsletter Article

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Attachment 1. Sample Newsletter Article

New Study Shows ASCs Could Play Pivotal Role in Health Care Reform

ASCs play a pivotal role in moving services into less expensive yet clinically appropriate settings according to a recent report by KNG Health Consulting.

The findings of the study highlight the role ASCs play in meeting the growing population needs for essential surgical and cancer screening services. The use of ASCs has likely slowed growth in total Medicare spending for outpatient surgical services because they offer a low-cost alternative to hospital outpatient departments (HOPDs), a goal the ASC industry suggests is consistent with national health reform priorities.

Promoting the use of ASCs for beneficiaries' outpatient surgical needs would obviously correlate to the health reform objectives articulated by Congress and the administration, which include promoting efficient use of services in the health care system and improving the value of Medicare's spending.

The results of this research demonstrate that ASCs have already been a beneficial partner to the Medicare program and its beneficiaries in constraining Medicare spending growth by providing a lower-priced option for outpatient surgical needs.

The research was conducted at the request of the national ASC Coalition, an organization of ASC associations and companies, to identify the factors that have contributed to the growth of ASCs.

Beyond demonstrating the role ASCs have played in moving surgical services into less expensive settings, this study **disproves** two factors critics of the ASC industry have suggested may offset the cost-reducing effects of the relatively low Medicare payment rates for ASCs.

1. Physicians who own ASCs have a financial incentive to perform more surgical services than they would if they could only provide outpatient surgical services in a HOPD; and
2. The expansion of outpatient surgical capacity in ASCs may lead to a higher overall volume of outpatient surgery.

This study found no statistical evidence that ASCs cause an increase in utilization of common Medicare procedures like colonoscopies and cataract surgery.

Taken as a whole, the research suggests that public policies promoting the expansion of ASC capacity have helped ensure access to essential surgical and cancer screening services at a savings to the Medicare program and its beneficiaries, and should be an important contribution to achieving health care reform goals.

To view the Executive Summary and full report go to the ASC Association web site at www.ascassociation.org/study.

Attachment 2. Sample Letter To State Legislators and Regulators

FIRST LAST
OFFICE
ADDRESS LINE ONE
CITY, STATE ZIP

DATE

DEAR Mr./Ms. LAST,

As president of the [State Association Name] I am writing on behalf of Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASCs) in [State]. ASCs are facilities where surgeries that do not require a hospital admission are performed. ASCs provide high-quality, cost-effective services and are vital to meeting the surgical needs of our state. There are more than 5,300 ASCs in the country, including [NUMBER] in [STATE]. They serve urban, suburban and rural patients of all ages.

In particular, I want to draw your attention to a recent study by the independent research firm KNG Health Consulting that demonstrates the importance of ASCs to affordable health care. Specifically, the study shows that ASCs play a pivotal role in moving services into less expensive yet clinically appropriate settings, saving patients, payors and the government money.

Among the key findings of the study are:

- ❖ 70% of the growth in Medicare services provided by ASCs between 2000 and 2007 is the result of moving procedures from hospital outpatient departments (HOPDs) into the less expensive ASC setting.
- ❖ For gastrointestinal and ophthalmology services—two major types of services ASCs provide—75% and 94% of the growth, respectively, in ASC services over the study period is from the migration of services into the less expensive ASC setting.
- ❖ Unlike what some critics suggest, ASCs do ***not*** result in a higher overall surgical volume.

Quite simply, ASCs can be a solution to the escalating cost of health care by providing quality care at a more affordable price. But we can not do it alone—we need your help. I ask that you help by keeping the vital importance of ASCs in mind in setting health care policy in [STATE].

With your help, ASCs in our state can continue to serve their community and ensure that patients continue to have access to high-quality and cost-effective care.

I have included a summary of the study for your information. The full study is available at www.ascassociation.org/study.pdf. I welcome the opportunity to work with you in the future. If I can be of assistance on this matter or others, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

FIRST LAST

Attachment 3. Sample Letter To The Editor

With health care reform efforts centering on the mantra of change, it is easy to overlook the fact that there are currently some types of health care providers meeting the basic goals of health reform by providing high-quality care for less.

Ambulatory Surgery Centers (ASCs) are already providing a solution to the sky-rocketing costs of health care and they could play a bigger role with the support of policy makers.

For example, when a Medicare patient chooses to have an extremely important cancer screening colonoscopy in an ASC they pay a co-pay of just \$79. Compare that to the \$186 the patient would pay if they had the same procedure done in a hospital. In this economy, a \$107 cost difference is real savings!

The fact that ASCs are more efficient and, are thus, able to provide the same care for less is undeniable. This saves the Medicare program billions of dollars per year.

Critics of ASCs sometimes make the argument that ASCs do not provide true savings because ASCs lead to the over-utilization of care. Recent research, however, by an independent health policy group, KNG Health Consulting, refutes this “if you build it they will come” argument.

Instead, the study concludes that the volume of procedures has increased in ASCs mainly because patients are choosing ASCs over the more costly hospital setting. This is a choice that policy makers should encourage.

The ASCs in this state are ready to provide a solution to the health care problems facing our nation, and with the support of policy makers we can continue to make high-quality, affordable health care a reality. In the debate over fixing our nation’s health care system, let’s not forget the solutions that we already have at our fingertips. ASCs are one such solution.