



Abington Memorial Hospital

Profile in Cardiovascular Excellence

Abington Memorial Hospital (AMH) is a 570-bed nonprofit regional teaching hospital serving three major counties in suburban Philadelphia. AMH has more than 35,500 annual inpatient admissions and is a Level 2 trauma center with more than 90,000 annual emergency room visits.

AMH competes to provide cardiovascular services with 10 other hospitals in a 15-mile range. Despite this high degree of competition, AMH has a robust cardiovascular program, including cardiac surgery, that performs 56% of valve surgeries in its market. The hospital frequently receives referrals from outside its service area from physicians and patients seeking specialized cardiac surgical services.

In 2007, AMH leaders embarked on a plan to enhance their hospital's Pilla Heart Center and partnered with Accelero Health Partners, an organization that specializes in service line management. Accelero works with partnering hospitals to aggregate cardiovascular services into a single service line and four manageable product lines: prevention, early detection/advanced diagnostics, disease management, and surgical/invasive interventions. Accelero and their partner hospitals create a continuum of care that is circular rather than linear in nature, keeping the patient within the continuum by providing efficient, effective, high-quality

care and giving them no reason to seek care elsewhere. Cardiovascular disease is progressive by nature. By managing care for the patient with cardiovascular disease in this manner, the patient electively chooses to remain within the continuum, resulting in a lifelong relationship with the hospital and associated care providers. AMH administration and physician leaders have worked with Accelero to provide consistent, quality care that is reinforced with a foundation of exemplary customer service. They have learned that improving patient care and reducing costs in their cardiovascular business are not mutually exclusive. As a result, AMH's administration and physician leadership tackled processes and clinical protocols to drive Abington Memorial's cardiovascular service line in a whole new direction.

Margaret M. McGoldrick
Executive Vice President
Abington Memorial Hospital



"Our No. 1 priority is patient safety and quality of care. Since working with Accelero, not only have these two areas improved, we have also reduced length of stay for our cardiac patients."

Robert A. Watson, III, MD
Chief, Cardiology Division
Abington Memorial Hospital



"One of the most important areas Accelero helped us focus on was driving out treatment variability for patients experiencing perioperative arrhythmias. Today, we have new protocols in place to improve patient care."



SPONSORED SUPPLEMENT

Creating A Sustainable Competitive Advantage

Abington Memorial Hospital Partners with Accelero to Drive Change

In its initial assessment of AMH's cardiac surgery program, Accelero found that, overall, the hospital delivered excellent care and had high marks in customer service. However, variability in the number of physician specialties and other caretakers assigned to a particular patient was causing inconsistencies in how care was delivered. According to V. Paul Addonizio, MD, chief of cardiac surgery at AMH, "One of the greatest challenges is managing the number of disciplines involved in caring for the cardiac surgery patient."

At the same time, the cardiac program's average length of stay was another concern for hospital leaders, says Robert A. Watson, III, MD, chief of cardiology. "After assessing data on the length of stay (LOS) of cardiac surgical cases of patients treated at Abington Memorial Hospital in 2006, it appeared that our overall LOS for these cases was greater than the national average. We partnered with Accelero Health Partners to identify the variables which may have accounted for the discrepancy. The identified inconsistencies increased the average LOS for patients following aortic valve replacement by nearly four days, compared with other like hospitals across the country," says Watson.

➤ **Creating LOS tool.** Accelero partnered with AMH to implement a computerized tracking tool that helped identify bottlenecks in the step-down unit. Today, step-down unit beds are targeted for transfers out of the ICU on an ongoing basis.

➤ **Expanding the role of the case manager.** Nurse case managers began meeting with patients at preadmission, and took on new duties including rounding on patients and participating in meetings with the interdisciplinary care team, which provided a forum for LOS issues and concerns.

Aortic Valve Replacement

LOS by Unit Impact

BEFORE		AFTER	
LOS Initiative		LOS Initiative	
Unit	ALOS	Unit	ALOS
Preoperative	1.70	Preoperative	2.03
CSU	5.19	CSU	3.48
Post CSU	6.11	Post CSU	3.89
TOTAL	13.00	TOTAL	9.40

Economic Performance Impact
(staff and supply costs per patient day)= \$353,899

Abington Memorial's Pilla Heart Center

- Five cardiac cath labs
- Two cardiac surgery operating rooms
- 10-bed cardiac surgery ICU
- Established heart center, valve institute, vascular center, and heart failure program
- Nine-bed cardiac care unit
- 23-bed heart failure unit
- Two 56-bed step-down cardiovascular units

Abington Memorial Hospital Enhances Heart Program

Working with AMH, Accelero's team set out to establish changes in the hospital's aortic valve replacement program including education for management and leadership staff in service line development, as well as:

➤ **Forming a heart council.** A team of surgeons, physicians, nurses, case managers, and operating room staff members began meeting every two weeks to execute cardiovascular initiatives established by senior hospital leaders and a new service line operations team.

➤ **Establishing and revising clinical pathways.** Based on input from case management, institutional guidelines for treatment of arrhythmia were created. "This included the use of antiarrhythmic agents and appropriate anticoagulation protocols, depending on the patient's risk of thromboembolic events," says Watson. "Prior to discharge, it was documented who would follow the patient's anticoagulation therapy as an outpatient."

Positive Results

Together, AMH and Accelero deployed strategies involving everyone from the COO to operating room and acute care staff to achieve greater consistency in patient care, resulting in a reduction in LOS by nearly four days. This occurred without increasing readmission rates.

AMH's aortic valve replacement program reported annualized improvement gains of \$354,000, as a result of staff and supply cost savings. Pleased with the results, AMH's financial team notes that this is a conservative estimate and does not reflect revenue generated through increased capacity and improved efficiencies.

Today, Accelero and AMH continue a successful partnership, with a focus on driving more improvement to the hospital's cardiovascular service line.

"We were excited to work with Abington Memorial Hospital from the start because of its outstanding reputation in cardiovascular care," says Carol Owens, vice president of operations at Accelero. "Throughout our working relationship, Abington's administrative team and physicians have been supportive of our approach to service line management. We look forward to taking the hospital's cardiovascular service line to a new level of excellence in patient care."

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