

Accelerero Helps Rural Hospital Compete Against City-Based Joint Replacement Programs



Improving community awareness and access drives joint replacement growth

■ AT A GLANCE

- 130-bed, nonprofit, acute care facility
- Member of a community hospital purchasing alliance
- Over 150 total joint replacement surgeries per year

■ ISSUES

- 40% decline in total joint replacements over the past four years
- Less than 50% market share for joint replacements in primary service area
- No formal strategy for growth

■ RESULTS

The organization implemented a strategic plan that led to 20% growth in total joint replacements during the first year, resulting in \$343,010 of new revenue and a blueprint for the future.

INTRODUCTION

The hospital is a 130-bed, non-profit acute care facility that is part of an 18-member purchasing alliance of community hospitals, and is located in the Appalachian region of the United States. Over the past four years the hospital has seen a 40% decline in total joint replacement surgeries; a significant number of patients chose to go to hospitals in the city 60 miles away for what they perceive to be better care. This decline has left the hospital with less than a 50% share in their primary service area, as shown in [FIGURE 1](#) on the following page.

A misconception existed as it pertained to access for new patients. Referral sources and patients were not aware of the new technologies, techniques and services offered by the orthopedic group. There was also a deficit in care givers as one of the four existing orthopedic surgeons had recently left the area to seek out new opportunities. And finally, management had not developed a plan to build community awareness and reverse the decline in joint replacement surgeries performed at the hospital.

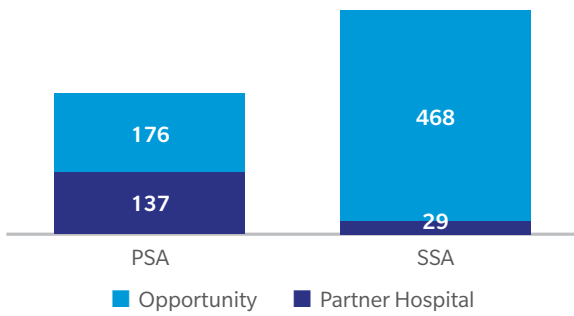


FIGURE 1 | Market share v. opportunity for the hospital in both the primary and secondary service area.

SOLUTION

Accelero Health Partners was brought in by the hospital leadership group to help define the market opportunity, improve access and grow total joint replacement volume.

Accelero conducted a thorough market analysis and created the framework for a strategic growth plan. To expeditiously take advantage of these recommendations, hospital management hired Accelero to implement, or put the plan into action. Key elements included: improving access to the orthopedic practice, integrating referral sourcing and implementing a community-based awareness program.

Improving Access

Accelero worked with the hospital to alter scheduling at the clinic and track by provider. To help ease access, a full-time sports medicine trained PCP was added to the group. This helped to improve the surgeon efficiency, resulting in more patients over the same amount of time.

Referral Source Integration

Time frames were established along with collateral materials and scripting for the hospital to communicate all of the attributes of their joint replacement program. The remaining doctors and staff collaborated to fill the void left by having one less orthopedic surgeon.

Community Awareness

A public relations and marketing strategy was created that began with an internal grass roots awareness program and then moved to traditional media. Additionally, community programming events were scheduled and conducted. The hospital coordinated these events in the form of several three-part miniseries covering a multitude of conservative and surgical topics. The practice brought their administrative schedulers to the events in order to fast track clinically appropriate patients into the practice.

SUMMARY

As a result of these efforts, the hospital was able to grow the number of total joint replacements by 20% with one less surgeon. This resulted in an additional \$254,082 in new revenue and \$88,928 in spin off revenue associated diagnostics, labs and rehabilitation services. Most importantly, the hospital now has the plan and infrastructure in place to continue to grow program awareness and build volume.