

Fostering Collaboration Between Orthopedic Practices and Hospital Leaders: An AAOE/Medstrat Survey Primer

Every clinical specialty understands that the world of healthcare is changing. Orthopedic practices inside and outside the hospital alike are being driven by legislation and financial pressures to work in concert with other entities—from hospital leadership to insurance providers to patients themselves—to realize cost savings while improving clinical outcomes. In an upcoming issue we will provide a survey which is meant to uncover the new business models, necessary partnerships, and specific practices that help them achieve this tricky goal.

Many of the survey questions aim to uncover who is fostering collaboration between orthopedic practices and hospital leaders, and which technologies are and should be shared to maximize this integration.

In some ways, though, the survey is meant to prompt a collaborative mindset as much as it is meant to assess it. We ask whether practice or hospital administrators have observed orthopedic surgeries to understand the technologies being used there, for instance, but we also ask if those administrators have been invited to do so. Additional questions seek to identify the specific formal processes that promote collaboration, which will yield a ready-made list of best practices, particularly in terms of integrating decision-making.

Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs) by definition require collaboration and integration among their constituents. While many orthopedic practices are part of an ACO already, there are few industry-wide resources investigating how these partnerships are working and distilling the results. This survey creates a rapid learning loop, helping us unlock insights into what has worked well for orthopedic practices in ACOs—and what has not. For instance, one large orthopedic group in the East was able to engage ACO leadership in a fruitful dialogue that led to ACO-wide adoption of orthopedic technology that improves workflow, reduces surgical costs and enables better patient care.

Stepping back, we also seek to learn how people are making the decision to enter into ACOs. One survey question asks how strategic business decisions, such as joining an ACO, are made in the first place—specifically, which percentage of these are made by administrators alone, by physicians alone, or by both. Your answers to this question will help us determine the power structure that leads to new business configurations in the orthopedic community, which can in turn help us map out paths to effective relationship structures which optimize clinical and business interests.

In addition to learning about participants' collaboration and decision-making, the survey aims to foster deeper understanding in the following areas:

- * Current trends in orthopedics partnerships (how many practices have joined an ACO or plan to join one in the near future)
- * Best methods for fostering effective relationships among hospitals and other partners
- * The resources required to build those partnerships

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