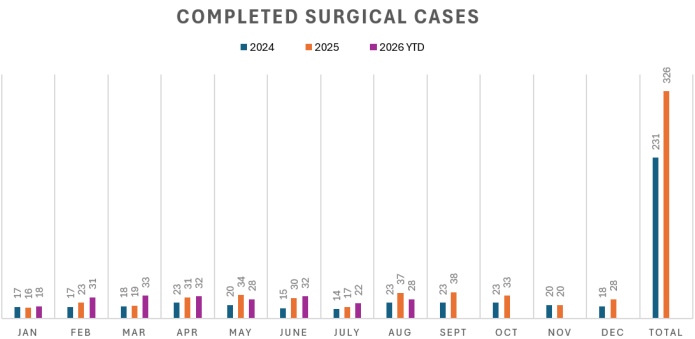


BACKGROUND

UMC Orthopedic and Spine Institute opened in October 2022, providing comprehensive orthopedic care including trauma, sports medicine, and elective surgical procedures for spine, joint replacement and sports medicine. The Registered Nurse (RN) position was established to support patients through advocacy, education, and preoperative medical navigation. By spring 2024, a second clinic was launched. In October 2024, two RNs were hired to staff each clinic. Prior to October 2024, the preoperative clearance processes were managed manually with paper records and binders. Recognizing the need for improved communication and efficiency across the two clinics, an electronic tracking system was implemented to coordinate patient care.

PURPOSE

This nurse-driven quality improvement project aimed to improve communication between two RNs supporting a single surgeon at separate clinic locations and streamline patient tracking during preoperative clearance. It is hypothesized that improved communication and tracking will lead to an increase in the number of primary lower extremity joint replacement surgeries performed, higher patient satisfaction, and a reduction in preoperative clearance delays and/or canceled surgeries.



41%

increase in primary lower extremity joint arthroplasty surgeries, 2024 → 2025



METHODS

Completed surgical cases were obtained through Epic reports and calculated manually.

RESULTS

After utilizing an electronic surgical tracking spreadsheet for one year, the RNs were able to increase the number of surgeries for primary lower extremity joint arthroplasty for a single surgeon 41% from 2024 to 2025. In addition, patients reported increased satisfaction with communication, education, and support throughout their preoperative clearance process, while the number of patients lost to clinic follow up decreased.

CONCLUSIONS

An electronic communication tool was an effective way to track patients from the date of surgical indication through the preoperative medical optimization process.