Monterey Peninsula Surgery Centers, LLC (MPSC) is an independent, multi-specialty, multi-facility ambulatory surgery center (ASC) located on the Central Coast of California. MPSC includes five facilities, with a total of 16 operating rooms and nearly 200 physicians on staff, performing more than 17,000 cases annually. In terms of outpatient procedure volume, MPSC is the sixth largest provider of outpatient surgeries in California. MPSC has long been an innovator in the ASC industry and was an early adopter of an electronic practice management solution. As the organization grew, however, they began to experience performance issues with their legacy solution. MPSC replaced their legacy solution with HSTpathways, a practice management solution that positions them for growth and innovation well into the future.
Monterey Peninsula Surgery Centers’ (MPSC) history of innovation stretches back to their founding in 1982. They were one of the first ASCs established on the Central Coast of California. In 2001, they were one of the first ASCs to execute an all-inclusive bundled payment agreement with a major insurance company. They have continued to innovate in the financial realm by contracting bundled payment packages directly with employers. They pioneered price transparency by posting procedure costs directly on their website (https://montereysurgerycenter.com/).

MPSC has also been an innovator in the clinical realm. In 2002, they pioneered major spine surgery in the ASC setting; they were also among the first to perform total joint replacement in the mid-2000s. The organization’s leadership has taken an active role in ASC advocacy, testifying to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) on behalf of ASC’s ability to perform complex spine procedures with high quality outcomes.

It’s perhaps no surprise, then, that MPSC was also an early adopter of electronic practice management software. Of course, being on the “bleeding edge” of technology adoption comes with pros and cons. As an early adopter, MPSC reaped the operational and efficiency benefits that come with using a digital practice management solution. The downside was, that as early adopters, MPSC’s solution was grounded in legacy technologies that no longer served the best interests of the enterprise.

**Performance Issues with Legacy Technology**

“Our previous system served us well for a long time, but we began to experience issues that made us question whether or not that solution was going to serve us best in the long term.”

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**Performance Issues with Legacy Technology**

“Our previous system served us well for a long time,” said Doug Stickler, Director, Information Technology, MPSC. “But we began to experience a number of issues that made us question whether or not that solution was going to serve us best in the long term.”

Stickler identified a number of areas in which MPSC began to experience problems with their legacy practice management system:

- **PERFORMANCE ISSUES.** MPSC’s previous system was designed for on-premise deployment. That is, the solution was deployed in servers purchased and maintained by MPSC’s information technology (IT) department. The system
architecture contributed to performance issues as MPSC’s volume of business grew. “We would try to run certain end-of-the-month reports, and the system would require us to kick everybody else out of the system in order to run the report,” Stickler said.

• **NOT DESIGNED FOR FULL ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT.** MPSC started out as a single facility, but now includes five locations. The legacy practice management solution wasn’t designed to support enterprise-level operations. “We had to log-in to each site separately,” said Stickler. “The solution didn’t support needed data sharing between sites or at the enterprise level.”

• **INADEQUATE CUSTOMER SERVICE.** “It was sometimes hard to get responsive customer support,” said Stickler. “And when we asked about possible improvements or reporting capabilities, when they got back to us, it turned into a scope of work request that was basically a way of figuring out how much they would charge us for the improvements we requested.”

• **CONCERNS ABOUT THE LONG-TERM DIRECTION OF THE COMPANY.** Ownership of MPSC’s legacy practice management solution changed several times over the course of MPSC’s use of the product. “The company seemed to lose a clear focus on ASCs,” said Stickler. “I had concerns they were going to change the product to focus on hospital outpatient departments and end up weighing down the software with a bunch of features that wouldn’t be useful for ASCs.”

**Evaluating Practice Management Options**

Because of these concerns, MPSC began to look at other options. Stickler identified peer organizations (high-volume, independent, multi-facility, multi-specialty ASCs) and found out what they were using. “We looked for existing ASCs that had an enterprise arrangement like us. Enterprises with multiple facilities, that needed both site-level and enterprise-level data sharing,” he said.

He asked around at conferences and in online ASC forums to see what colleagues were using. “We looked at everything from large vendors like Epic and Cerner to small, single-center type vendors,” Stickler said.

Based on his long experience in the IT industry, Stickler knew that the vendor presentations that happen during the sales process don’t always accurately represent an organization’s experience with a product after the sale. That is why checking references was an especially important part of MPSC’s research.

“We found that HSTpathways has a long list of happy customers and a history of doing right by their clients,” said Stickler. In the end, MPSC selected HSTpathways because of “their excellent references, the product features and the cost.”

**Performance Issues Resolved and New Functionality Realized**

Stickler said that HSTpathways provided plenty of support both pre- and post-implementation of the new practice management solution. “Changing a practice management solution is always going to be disruptive,” said Stickler, “but with HSTpathways’ support, we avoided the bumps in the road that you might expect after implementing a major new system.”

Post go-live, Stickler found that deploying the HSTpathways solution resolved the performance issues MPSC had been experiencing. In addition, HSTpathways offered additional system capabilities that streamlined operations, improved workflow, and facilitated reporting and decision-making across the enterprise.

Stickler identified five general areas in which HSTpathways has exceeded expectations:

• **EXCELLENT PERFORMANCE.** Moving from on-premise deployment to a hosted solution resolved the performance issues MPSC was having and offered additional benefits as well. “The hosted option is really good for us, from a systems management perspective,” said Stickler. “It’s better protected security-wise than what we could afford to do on our own. System maintenance, system updates and program updates are all now managed for us through the hosted side, which is great. We don’t have any more performance issues, either. Now, if I run a report, it’s not going to slow anybody else down,” said Stickler.
• **COST-EFFECTIVE.** “HSTpathways’ hosted solution is also more cost-effective. On the system side, the cost of ownership of the hosted solution is better for MPSC than the on-premise situation because we no longer have the cost of buying and maintaining those servers or the cost of the staff time needed to maintain those servers,” said Stickler.

• **DESIGNED FOR ENTERPRISE MANAGEMENT.** HSTpathways is designed to support enterprise-level management. “HSTpathways has improved our ability to manage our business as an enterprise,” said Stickler. “Better enterprise information helps us make better decisions. The system administration capabilities helped us with standardizing supply lists across our facilities, with physician preference cards, with payer contracts and fee schedule updates. All of those things take a lot less time now than they used to.”

• **EASY TO USE.** “HSTpathways is really easy for people to use,” said Stickler. “That is a real benefit to the organization. Users of all abilities – from the tech savvy, to the not-so-tech savvy – have been able to easily find the information they need without becoming technology experts. The reporting is not hard for people to figure out, either. That has been a net positive for the organization.”

• **SUPPORTS DATA INTEGRATION.** As the Director of IT, Stickler especially appreciates the ease of data integration with HSTpathways. MPSC chose to integrate HSTpathways with four other best-of-breed solutions, including IOS Envi (supply chain management), One Medical Passport (patient engagement/preadmissions), MedTek (transcription) and ePay Loyale (patient financial engagement). “HSTpathways is fabulous at data integration and interfaces,” said Stickler. “That is a key highlight of the solution.”

• **OUTSTANDING CUSTOMER SERVICE.** “Customer support is a definite strength of HSTpathways,” said Stickler. “We almost always get a live person when we call. If we do have to leave a message, we get a call back the same day. We throw some pretty random stuff at them sometimes, but I am happy knowing that anybody in the organization can call that number and get support.”

**HSTpathways is Committed to the ASC Industry**

Stickler appreciates the fact that HSTpathways was founded and designed specifically for ASC organizations and workflows. “Tom Hui (Founder and CEO of HSTpathways) is totally committed to the ASC industry,” said Stickler. “With HSTpathways, we knew we were getting a solution that was built for us. It wasn’t going to start becoming hospital-oriented or something more complicated than we needed.

“We are very happy to be involved with a company that is focused specifically on the ASC industry,” said Stickler. “The leadership of the company gives us confidence that over the next decade, we are not going to have to worry about changing our system. We don’t have to worry about features not keeping pace with the changing industry or prices going out-of-control. Our future looks good with HSTpathways.”

**About HSTpathways**

HSTpathways is a top-ranked, cloud-based Ambulatory Surgery Center software company dedicated to serving the ASC industry. HST was named KLAS Category Leader for Ambulatory Surgical Center Solutions in the “2018 Best in KLAS: Software & Services” report. Clients include more than 750 organizations such as freestanding ambulatory surgery centers and ASC-hospital joint ventures, as well as 50 multi-facility corporate enterprises. HSTpathways provides the most trusted enterprise software management solution available to the ASC industry. HST offers specialized software solutions to help ASC organizations achieve efficiencies with surgical scheduling, supply chain management, EHR clinical workflows, medical coding, insurance and patient billing, and accounts receivable collections. For more information, visit www.HSTpathways.com.

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