

## Success Story: Jacksonville Orthopaedics Institute PA

**“One must not hold one’s self so divine as to be unwilling occasionally to make improvements in one’s creations.” — Ludwig van Beethoven**

Patient satisfaction is not a direct result of surveying patients more frequently. Rather it is paying attention to their comments when asked and trying to make improvements that satisfy their needs.

**“We must act strategically and pace our growth with the needs of the community.”**

### Background

Jacksonville Orthopaedics Institute, Jacksonville, Fla., began in 1994 when two groups merged. The eight physicians from both groups held tight to a vision of the practice that exists today. In 1996, they added four more practices, and today the practice has grown to include 26 orthopedic physicians and two physiatrists. The practice also has six rehabilitation centers and three MRI centers.

### Success factors

Patrick A. Hinton, executive director, attributes success to the responsiveness of the staff to all of their patients and referring physicians.

“We encourage all our staff, including the physicians, to be available and accessible to our patients and referring physicians,” Hinton says. “We try to be respectful of everyone’s schedules and want to make sure that patients get in as soon as possible. In many cases, that’s the same day.”

Unfortunately, this urgency can cause some back-up with patient wait time. However, patients recognize the strong work ethic of

both physicians and staff and accept the additional wait time. They know that they will be treated with quality care and concern and that they might have been worked into an already busy schedule.

“We do ask that our check-in staff be honest with the patients and let them know at check-in if a physician is running late and how long the patient will most likely wait,” Hinton says. “We also offer the patient the opportunity to reschedule if needed.”

In addition, the physicians are dedicated to the community. The sports medicine physicians are very visible by participating in the Jacksonville sports medicine program. This program gathers physicians in orthopedics and family practice medicine as volunteers to cover local high school sporting events. The physicians are also the team physicians for the National Football League’s Jacksonville Jaguars and cover all the local college and university sports medicine needs.

And, finally, the practice has not raised its fees in the last seven years, but has enjoyed more than a 10 percent annual growth in the clinical services and a tremendous increase in ancillary services revenue.

### Patient satisfaction measures

The practice has conducted surveys to gather patient feedback, but most likely will not conduct another in the near future.

“We already knew about the problems that were indicated in the surveys,” Hinton says. “We knew that physician wait time was an issue, and we are trying to address it. However, the

surveys also reinforced what the staff was doing well in communication, interpersonal skills and service.”

Hinton stresses that the physician wait time referred to in the surveys lies with the actual time spent in the waiting room. They try to get every patient in for an appointment within a two-week period. So, you do not wait to get an appointment, you wait for your physician who might be running behind schedule.

### Efficiencies and operational programs

Hiring new physicians to handle the patient load is one of the priorities in the practice. The patient need already exists. Hiring more physicians will help alleviate some of the wait times experienced today.

“We must act strategically and pace our growth with the needs of the community,” Hinton says. “Jacksonville is a booming city and is projected to grow by at least 300,000 people in the next five or 10 years. We have to meet that growth and target the right locations with the appropriate medical needs.”

In addition, the practice has been successful with its ancillary service offerings, adding more physicians and offices. They have seven locations, making it easier for patients to schedule visits at an office close to work or home.

“The easiest measure of success in any business is financial performance and profitability,” Hinton says. “We are expanding into the suburban growth areas, taking the approach of putting general orthopedists in those locations who will act as conduits for our subspecialists in the other locations.”