

FEDERATED AMBULATORY SURGERY ASSOCIATION

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 12, 2000

Kathy Bryant
Executive Director
703-836-8808
ASC@ascassociation.org

FASA ANNOUNCES CREDENTIALING PLAN FOR ASC ADMINISTRATORS

FASA President Robert C. Williams today announced that FASA is establishing a program for credentialing ambulatory surgery center (ASC) administrators, saying "Serving as an ASC administrator requires specialized knowledge in ASC reimbursement, contracting, human resources, clinical areas and other fields. Currently, there exists no mechanism for the many qualified individuals in this field to demonstrate their competence." Williams continued saying, "The program will not only benefit those that pursue the credential but will provide ASC owners a mechanism to verify that the individuals they hire have sufficient knowledge to do the job effectively. It will also benefit those in the industry who strive to achieve a higher level of success in ASCs but have no program to follow in honing and refining their ASC and management skills." According to FASA's Executive Director Kathy Bryant, the FASA office regularly receives calls from individuals in other parts of health care wishing to transfer to the ASC arena. Bryant believes these individuals will be prime targets for such a program. Williams noted that the benefits of the program will not be limited to ASCs saying, "Quantifying what quality management is will help to assure that as our industry expands ASCs will continue to provide the high quality care that has always been delivered."

In most ASCs, the administrator is the most senior manager. As such he or she is responsible for all aspects of the ASC's operation, including staffing, scheduling, equipment and supply purchasing, complying with government regulations, the development of processes to provide clinical services, and insurance contracting. Many ASC administrators come from a nursing background, but a business background is also common. Both backgrounds provide some of the knowledge necessary to be successful but both leave major gaps to be filled. Experience in the hospital or physician office arena are common for those of both backgrounds, but the reimbursement systems, the approach and the type of work done is so different that these backgrounds leave the new administrator struggling to acquire the necessary knowledge. With the industry expanding, ASCs need a source of qualified administrators. FASA believes this credential will help to fill this gap by defining the critical body of knowledge and identifying sources for this knowledge.

As the largest and most diverse group in the ambulatory surgery industry, FASA is the logical group to develop such a program. FASA membership includes owners, surgeons, administrators, and other staff, all of who will be involved in the development of the program, according to Bryant. FASA is not new to the standard setting business. In its early days, FASA established standards and accredited ASCs. As the industry expanded, FASA joined with a few other groups and formed the Accreditation Association of Ambulatory Health Care (AAAHC), an organization FASA continues to be involved with in pursuit of high quality care.

The development process will begin with a committee to be appointed by the end of the month to define the body of knowledge that ASC administrators need to run effectively an ASC and to develop the process and timeline for implementation of the project. More details, such as the credential's title, will be ironed out at FASA's January Board meeting. Although lacking a specific timeline, the Board would like the first exams given within two years and the first credentials issued shortly thereafter.

Although limiting the project initially to ASC administrators, the FASA Board of Directors did not rule out parallel programs for HOPDs and office-based surgery practices as this plan is developed.

Mr. Williams serves as FASA's elected president. He currently serves as a Senior Development Executive for Johnson and Johnson Health Care Systems Inc. Mr. Williams has been active in the ASC industry from its early days, serving as administrator of the first ASC in the seventies and as the first executive director of FASA. He resides in Flagstaff, Arizona.