

## **Foreword**

### **Robotic Surgery: The Secrets to World Class Performance**

**By Josh Feldstein and Herb Coussons, MD**

#### **CHOOSING A PROVIDER FOR SURGERY: A DECISION WITH LIFELONG IMPLICATIONS**

In our modern healthcare world, one of the most important decisions a patient must make is where to go for a major surgical procedure.

Even the sophisticated consumer can find it difficult to navigate the complexity of our healthcare system to obtain meaningful data about the proficiency and expertise of the prospective surgeon and hospital. As a result, many default to deciding based purely on the “brand” of the hospital system as a way of feeling more secure: MD Anderson, Mayo, Hopkins, Duke, Cleveland Clinic, and others that provide some comfort to the prospective patient because he or she believes that surgeons and operating room staff at these facilities “have to be competent or they wouldn’t be allowed to work there.”

While we all would like to believe that this concept is true – and it may be, in some part – those of us in healthcare also know that these institutions also allow marginal surgeons to operate, as well as surgeons of advancing years with diminishing skills.

The fact is, when a hospital system employs a surgeon, they have a financial interest in that surgeon performing cases and maintaining adequate capacity to provide surgical services within that specialty. The simple truth – which should literally send chills down the spines of patients facing surgery – is that marginally competent surgeons practice at university centers and prominent private clinics alike. Just because a patient goes to a

“name brand” institution is absolutely no guarantee that they will end up in the hands of a highly competent surgeon.

Even a so-called routine surgery can lead to life-altering complications and even death. So how does a hospital system improve the overall performance of its surgical staff while assisting prospective patients in finding the most competent surgeons? How do departments of surgery seek to enhance the overall surgical experience and outcomes for their patients while providing the most support for their surgeons? One must understand the questions in order to find such solutions. For example, we all know that data plays a key role in being able to analyze and comparatively assess where a hospital system stands relative to clinical quality, and thus how to move it forward. However, simply collecting data without the right surgeon performance metrics to analyze that data – and most importantly without the knowledge to take positive action from such data – is where companies like CAVA Robotics and experts like Josh Feldstein and Dr. Herb Coussons play an important role in moving a healthcare system’s surgical program in a positive direction for all stakeholders: patients, surgeons, and the hospital as a whole.

When facing a major surgery, a patient should have the benefit of knowing some basic facts about the surgeon and the facility. For example, for a patient who needs a robotic prostatectomy for prostate cancer, facts such as impotency and incontinence rates should be available. Surgeons expect patients to place trust in their abilities, but the days of blind trust are over. Surgeons and hospitals need to be able to provide patients with competency and clinical consistency. Surgical mishaps and complications will always occur to some degree despite everyone’s best efforts. Allowing marginal surgeons to continue to operate without either re-educating them or restricting them significantly increases the risk of bad outcomes for patients, and are indeed self-inflicted, avoidable occurrences that increase liability risk and decrease brand equity.

In today’s competitive healthcare marketplace, it is critical for hospital systems to do more than just talk about quality in their surgical services; they must have the tools in

place to positively impact surgical outcomes. This book seeks to identify the questions and bring forward solutions that can help hospitals deliver the finest robotic surgical programs. This information can also assist patients in selecting the most competent robotic surgeons.

There are many pearls throughout this important book by Josh Feldstein and Herb Coussons, MD, that a wide range of healthcare professionals will find invaluable and will want to implement into the surgical quality program of their hospital. Ultimately, the goal of this knowledge is to create more positive change within the hospital system at both the local level as well as at the level of society, thus positively impacting the quality of robotic surgical care received by hundreds of thousands of patients annually.

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