

Surgical Specialists of Spokane Embrace Change and Growth in Pursuit of Excellence.

The practice of medicine is always moving forward — and today, that progress is coming at a faster pace than ever before. The combination of advancing knowledge, vast, accessible storehouses of information and analysis, instant communication, and the time tested synergies of talent, skill, training and experience means physicians today have new tools with which to hone and improve their daily practice of medicine.

For the twelve partner physicians who operate Surgical Specialists of Spokane — one of the nation's largest private surgical groups (independent of university settings or hospital ownership) — success today means embracing technology, adopting a spirit of cooperation, and focusing tenaciously on the pursuit of excellence.

“In Spokane, you're going to get good care wherever you go,” says the group's president and managing partner Michael Moore, M.D. “Our aim is to try to advance what we do as surgeons in measurable ways that can be used to help standardize the things that work best and improve both the practice of surgery and overall outcomes for patients.”

Measurable Results

Today, the group uses information from regional and national databases including the University of Washington's SCOAP (Surgical Clinical Quality Assessment Program) and the American College of Surgeons' SQIP (National Surgical Quality Improvement Program) along with their own data to gain new insights.

Surgical Specialists was among the first groups in the region to adopt Electronic Patient Records. “We were years ahead of the hospitals and most other practices,” says Moore. “What that means for us today, is that we have large databases we can use to compare what we do here with other surgeons and hospitals around

the state and the nation. By learning which techniques and approaches result in the best outcomes, we continually raise the bar and establish higher standards of care that are uniform and always advancing — because they're based on measurable evidence. Understanding what works best helps us improve care and lower costs for patients. Like anyone else, surgeons are judged by the results of their work and we're proud to say that ours measure up very well.”

A Spirit of Cooperation

The practice of medicine in general and surgery in particular has changed significantly over the past few decades. “It wasn't so long ago, that a general surgeon did just about every sort of procedure you can imagine,” says Dr. Moore. Today, increased specialization means practices like Surgical Specialists of Spokane can offer patients a higher level of expertise based on both advanced training and focused experience.

“One of the big advantages we have as a large group is that we have an opportunity to share cases. Whether it's a colorectal surgery, oncological, laparoscopic or another kind of specialized procedure — the partner who does the surgery, is the one who does it best.” For the physicians involved, that means additional time spent reviewing cases in mandatory morbidity and mortality conferences where the surgeons scrutinize their more difficult and challenging procedures to share their insights and experience with one another. “Over time,” says Moore, “our growth and success has been due in large part to the fact that we've learned to share, sacrifice and support one another — and leave egos at the door.”

A good example of those values in practice is the group's colorectal surgery team. Surgical Specialists is home to three fellowship trained and board certified colorectal surgeons,

Shane McNevin MD, Adam Juvlier, MD and most recently, Kimberly Hartnett, MD. Each surgeon focuses solely on the treatment of complex and difficult colorectal diseases, and offers the region's referring physicians and patients access to an unusually high level of competence, training, skill and experience.

The size of the practice also means they can offer services over a broad geographic region ranging from central Washington to Idaho, Montana, and eastern Oregon. “We have offices at every hospital in the area and work closely with both Providence and Community Health Systems to provide the highest possible standard of care at each and every institution,” said Moore. Partners at Surgical Specialists also hold or have held medical executive positions at all of the area's major hospitals.

The group's independence and the fact that it's not owned or controlled by any single hospital system or provider means its members are available to serve the area's referring physicians and patients at any hospital in the region.

Trauma Care and Physician Education

In addition to general surgery and subspecialties, Surgical Specialists of Spokane provides 100% of the surgeons who staff the region's only Level 2 Trauma program at Sacred Heart Medical Center. “While trauma care is still the model of TV surgery,” says Moore. In practice, trauma care really is the sort of surgery where decisions need to be made quickly and surgeons learn to make strength out of chaos. But we still operate with established protocols and compare ourselves to state and national normative standards — and what that data tells us is that our outcomes here are very good.”

The group also participates in an

program that offers trauma care training to physicians around the region and spends time with medical students and residents providing training in general surgical care.

The Only Constant is Change

“Change is something we can count on,” says Moore. “Whether it's changes in health care legislation, advances in science and technology, or simply the aggregation of our own personal insights that help us improve the ways in which we practice. At Surgical Specialists of Spokane, it's always our goal to be ahead of the curve and raising the bar for our practice of medicine and the patients it serves.”



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