SURGICAL SOLUTIONS

Proven Outcomes. Trusted Partnerships.
Surgical Solutions is redefining non-clinical operations.

CASE STUDY

Recover Fast. Build to Last.

How a 390-Bed Independent Hospital Resolved a Critical Backlog, Restored Compliance, and Established the Foundation for Long-Term Success

Overview

When a sister hospital in the region closed, the volume it had carried didn't disappear. It transferred.

As a result, a 390-bed independent hospital in the Midwest had to absorb a significant increase in case volume while managing the transfer of capital equipment from the closed facility into storage, without time to triage, organize, or deploy it.

Staff turnover accelerated. Trays piled up. By the time the situation became a formal project, the department was managing an average of nearly 400 trays down per day, with instruments missing, audits incomplete, and compliance documentation lagging.

Surgical Solutions was asked to provide embedded support, focused initially on tray reduction, instrument reconciliation, and process stabilization. The engagement demonstrated such significant progress that the hospital invited Surgical Solutions to assume full management of endoscopy and sterile processing at the main hospital, as well as supporting endoscopy at the ambulatory surgery center.

Results

67%
reduction in average trays down

157
missing instruments identified and corrected

295
instrument trays audited and passed

CHALLENGE

Managing Disruption While Keeping the OR Running

With the nearby hospital closing, leadership faced an operational cascade with limited runway. Case volume increased. Capital equipment arrived from the closed site in quantity without the infrastructure to absorb it. The assembly room became both a workspace and emergency storage.

The workforce challenge compounded the operational one. Though a significant portion of the sterile processing team had come from the sister facility, turnover continued. The hospital was relying heavily on contingent labor to maintain throughput, which added cost and variability without being able to address the structural gaps underneath. When the engagement began, the hospital's contingent labor contracts were canceled and the Surgical Solutions team absorbed that coverage reduction without a corresponding decrease in case volume or backlog pressure.

The risks were clear and accumulating:

- **Procedure readiness**. With nearly 400 trays down on average per day, the department struggled to reliably support the surgical schedule.
- **Untracked instrument loss**. Missing instruments had accumulated and reconciliation was difficult to allocate attention to. The full scope of the problem was unknown.
- **Regulatory exposure**. Preventive maintenance documentation was out of compliance, leaving accreditation in jeopardy.
- **No recovery path in sight**. The conditions producing the backlog were still active and volume was not going to decrease.

Surgical Solutions worked alongside hospital leadership to establish structure before attempting transformation. The engagement began with embedded operational support and expanded in scope as results demonstrated what was possible.

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SOLUTION

Stabilize First. Make Changes Second.

1. Close the Gap

Certified technicians were placed to manage trays, closing the gap that had allowed backlogs to compound. Daily leadership huddles, tray tracers, and productivity monitoring logs created the consistency the department had been missing. Average trays down moved from near 500 at peak to a stable range within the initial engagement period.

2. Reconcile and Reorganize

The assembly room was reorganized around back-up instrumentation carts, including purpose-built urology and neuro carts, replacing an ad hoc storage arrangement with structured, accessible inventory by category. Alongside the reconciliation work, nine new instrument sets were built from the ground up, expanding available tray inventory beyond what the transfer of equipment from the closed facility had depleted. Vendor management controls were reinforced to support efficiency and accountability. Across 25 trays, 157 missing instruments were identified and corrected. 295 instrument trays were audited and passed.

3. Remediate and Integrate

A formal risk assessment documented deficiencies in both departments. Sterilizer preventive maintenance records in SPD were brought current. In Endoscopy, a defined decontamination workflow was established in alignment with AAMI ST91 guidelines, and clinical engineering documentation was corrected for filter inspection per OEM requirements. Infection Prevention was engaged as an ongoing participant in department walkthroughs, converting a one-time remediation into a sustainable structure. Additional training was provided at no cost to the hospital.

The embedded team did not limit its scope to SPD. Significant time was invested building direct relationships with OR leads, nursing staff, and surgeons, communicating in clinical terms, addressing equipment concerns in real time, and establishing a credible presence on the procedural side of the operation.

Before

After

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Key Results

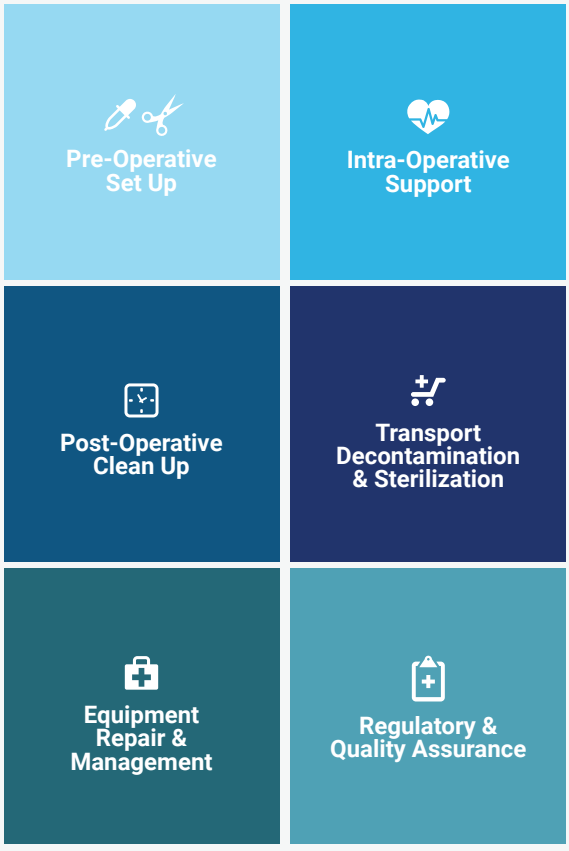
The numbers moved quickly. The average tray backlog fell 67%. Instruments were reconciled and trays cleared for use. Compliance gaps that had been accumulating across both departments were systematically closed. Instrument stacking was significantly reduced across decontamination and prep areas, with a corresponding decline in damaged instrumentation evidenced by repair bin volume.

The team that absorbed the departure of contingent workers and still drove these results was not doing a different version of the same work. The capability was different. For perioperative leaders managing the aftermath of a closure, a consolidation, or a volume increase that has outpaced departmental infrastructure, that distinction is the starting point.

Why Choose Surgical Solutions

- **Long-Term Cost Optimization** Through reduced repair volume and improved vendor contract performance, hospitals continue to benefit from measurable financial gains year after year.
- **Sustained Operational Alignment** Regular coordination between sterile processing and clinical teams keeps accountability in place long after the initial engagement closes.
- **Continuous Workflow Refinement** Ongoing assessment of reprocessing, clinical flow, and department handoffs ensures efficiency gains compound over time rather than erode.
- **Predictive Inventory Insights** Real-time visibility into instrument and scope inventory ensures the right equipment is available at the right time, reducing delays caused by missing, damaged, or untracked assets.

Let Surgical Solutions empower your hospital with proven expertise and a collaborative approach. Together, we'll optimize efficiency, elevate patient care and achieve lasting improvements.



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