2013 Surgical Expansion Report

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Surgical suite expansion is slowing, but continues to be a focal point for healthcare providers.

In the U.S. there are just over 7,500 hospitals, and based on findings from a recent Surgical Products survey, as many as 4,500 of them could either be in the midst of expansion or have experienced some form of it in the last two years.

In assembling and evaluating the results, Surgical Products focused on the significant amount of construction/expansion taking place at hospitals, a shrinking number of surgical centers, and clinics around the country. We asked our readers what types of investments were being made and how these expenditures will impact their surgical capabilities. The survey's key findings follow.

A Closer Look
When asked about recent expansion projects, nearly 60 percent of respondents said they have seen expansion construction take place at their facility within the last two years. Additionally, almost half are currently in the midst of such a project and over 62 percent stated that expansion will take place sometime over the next three years. All of these numbers represent slight decreases from one year ago.

In looking at individual responsibilities, 58 percent of those responding had input before construction began or during the expansion process. This includes product selection and specification.

Respondent comments pointed to the most significant investments being geared toward constructing more operating rooms, general infrastructure upgrades, accommodating specific technologies or equipment, and growing ER capabilities. Of note, respondents saw fewer dollars being spent on administrative space and outpatient procedure ORs, in comparison to last year's survey.

When asked about which area of their expansion project received the most funding:

-- 67 percent said monitoring equipment.
-- 63 percent said lighting.
-- Booms and communication tools were also cited by more than half of respondents.
When asked about the most significant surgical benefit that has been realized as a result of an expansion project, or is projected to be realized following completion of their facility's expansion project:
-- 53 percent cited improved visualization technology, such as monitors, lighting, etc.
-- 54 percent look forward to improved post-op patient care resources.
-- 41 percent feel that the implementation of new, less invasive surgical capabilities are or will be the greatest benefit.

In examining the findings of this short, yet venerable survey, a number of key points were validated regarding the rate of OR expansion investments. First, it is encouraging to see that our readership of surgeons, OR nurses, OR supervisors, and procurement agents are heavily involved in these new projects. This ensures a greater focus on quality equipment and patient-oriented priorities, as opposed to more emphasis being placed on financial savings.
Perhaps the most significant challenges facing the operating room continue to be infection control, reducing procedure times, and the elimination of never events. This makes advancements and continued investment in lighting, visualization, and MIS instrumentation vitally important as the surgical community looks to play a key role in reducing healthcare costs.

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