

Press Release



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New Survey Takes Important Step in Defining Comprehensive Spine Programs

NeuStrategy and SpineMark release results of the first-ever Spine Center of Excellence (COE[®]) Survey of 99 spine programs

Chicago, Ill. and San Diego, Calif. (July 14, 2009) – NeuStrategy, Inc., Chicago and SpineMark Corporation, San Diego announce the results of the nation's first-ever Spine Center of Excellence (COE[®]) Survey, a powerful new benchmarking tool to help define best practices in spine care. Currently back pain ranks among the leading reasons patients head to the doctor's office, and industry sources estimate 4.6 million Americans will need spine surgery at some point in their lives.

"While the cost of diagnosing and treating back and neck problems continues to rise, many patient care delivery systems are failing to show improved patient outcomes," explains Kevin Dunne, NeuStrategy Partner.

The Spine COE Survey measured the critical infrastructure of 99 spine care programs across 35 U.S. states and three international locations. Participating hospitals and practices are using the results to compare their program strengths, identify gaps and plan for improved delivery of spine care.

"The Spine COE Survey is the first step toward standardizing measures to define spine centers of excellence. Hospitals today must define themselves by programs that improve the quality of care and the services provided," explains Marcy Rogers, President and CEO of SpineMark. "The results of the survey prove that there is room for improvement in spine care. We have created a comprehensive care model that aligns the interests of patients, physicians and facilities to offer quality-based care with measurable results."

The newly released tool segments participating hospitals into two categories: Emerging (EP) versus Comprehensive programs (CP). In addition to exhibiting an interdisciplinary team in a focused environment, hospitals with an emphasis on tracking performance and quality achieve the highest ratings:

Key Findings

- CPs provide greater access to minimally invasive spine surgeries
- CPs report greater use of clinical pathways and outcomes measurement
- CPs also report greater use of integrative medicine services; such as acupuncture, chiropractic, massage therapy or reflexology
- CPs also report much higher availability of telemedicine (72% vs. 26%) potentially including live video links coupled with electronic medical histories

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- Nine in ten CPs have an ambulatory surgery center compared to just six in ten EPs – a signal they may be better positioned for outpatient spine surgery growth

“Back problems increase with age, so U.S. hospitals face a double-edged sword,” continues Dunne. “The aging population will continue to drive up demand for expensive, new diagnostic and treatment technologies at a time when greater scrutiny is being placed on outcomes. Only spine centers that streamline access to care and provide excellent outcomes at a reasonable cost will be able to successfully reconcile these two conflicting interests.”

Together, NeuStrategy, Inc., healthcare strategists focused on neuroscience, orthopedic and oncology services, and SpineMark Corp., a spine care services organization that partners with hospitals and physicians to develop spine centers, worked with a panel of industry experts to identify the critical infrastructure components of spine centers. Fielded as a web-based survey in the winter of 2008, all responses are self-reported. Participating organizations received a customized report card, detailing how their services compare to others across the country.

Hospitals are encouraged to participate in the Spine COE Survey, which is available online at www.neustrategy.com and www.spinemark.com.

About NeuStrategy, Inc.

NeuStrategy, Inc. provides a broad spectrum of strategic, financial and operational support to health systems, physician practices and industry vendors focused on neuroscience, orthopedic and oncology services. The company focus is on products, services and partnerships that deliver the intelligence and resources needed to succeed in today’s complex healthcare environment.

Rooted in a legacy of specialized healthcare industry expertise, NeuStrategy principals and its team of advisory consultants have completed more than 150 customized neuroscience and related orthopedic and oncology healthcare engagements for academic and community health systems across the country. For more information visit www.neustrategy.com.

About SpineMark

SpineMark Corporation is an innovative service organization dedicated to transforming the delivery of spine care. The company partners with hospitals and physicians across the United States and abroad to develop and operate comprehensive, evidence-based spine centers of excellence. By building a global network of spine centers, spine research organizations and state-of-the-art medical conference facilities, SpineMark is improving the overall quality of life of patients afflicted with spine disorders and injuries.

Driven by the specialized experience and expertise of its leadership team and medical advisory board, SpineMark’s goal is to create a global network, based on clinically validated best practices for spine care that streamline diagnosis and treatment, simplify referrals and accelerate the recovery process. Find more information on www.spinemark.com.

“COE” is a registered trademark of NeuStrategy, Inc.

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