

## CASE STUDY

# How Quality Drives Growth:

## Attracting & Retaining High-Acuity ICU Cases



### BACKGROUND



~13,000  
Annual Discharges



Regional Community  
Hospital



33 ICU Beds



266 Acute  
Care Beds

### CHALLENGES

Patients in the ICU received the proper level of care; however, not much was being done to manage the department's performance or support complex cases. Transfers out were commonplace, and transfers in were virtually nonexistent. With many prestigious competitors in the surrounding area, the hospital struggled to grow its share of high-acuity cases and attract key surgical specialties. As a result, clinical, financial, and operational performance suffered.

### AMBITIOUS GOALS

Hospital leadership embarked on a plan to improve the ICU with the following goals:

- ▶ Recruit and retain high-profile specialists
- ▶ Increase the number of cardiovascular interventions and procedures
- ▶ Increase share of region's high-acuity patients
- ▶ Deliver superior care 24/7/365

### A SOUND SOLUTION

In 2018, the hospital selected Sound Physicians to staff and manage the ICU. Based on 20 years of proven performance management experience, Sound's critical care program brought structure, protocols, and clinical innovation to the hospital. With the foundation in place, Sound recruited an exemplary clinical leader who could drive transformational change in partnership with the hospital. The new leader leveraged her relationships to attract highly engaged clinicians to build and expand the program.

## HOSPITAL-WIDE IMPACT



Hired a top-notch  
cardiothoracic (CT)  
surgeon



Increased cardiology  
procedures/cases



Establishment of an  
extracorporeal membrane  
oxygenation (ECMO) program



Significant reduction in  
the number of patients  
transferred out

## A TRANSFORMATIVE CHANGE TO EXCEPTIONAL CARE

With a stellar ICU team at the ready, the cardiac surgery team attracted ten times more cases, completing more than 200 procedures annually. Even the sickest patients received the requisite care on-site, and the ICU regularly accepted transfers from other facilities.

Sound's overhaul of the department drove ICU performance and created a center of innovation and engagement within the hospital. This new approach to care led to regular participation in clinical trials with renowned research institutions, which elevated the hospital's reputation in the community. Partnerships between the ICU and the surgical, radiological, and emergency medicine teams have brought about improvements in patient experience scores across the hospital.

Initially, the ECMO program was established to support emergent patient needs within the hospital. Due to demand, the ICU expanded from one ECMO circuit to ten and became a regional transfer center for patients in need of this life-saving care.

## RESULTS

-  Increase in ICU Index from 51% to 87%
-  10x increase in cardiac cases from 20-30 to 200+
-  Increase Leapfrog intensivist physician staffing (IPS) score from 15/100 to 100/100
-  14% decrease in hospital LOS for ICU patients
-  17% decrease in ICU LOS



To learn more about partnering with Sound Physicians,  
email [partnership@soundphysicians.com](mailto:partnership@soundphysicians.com) or visit [www.soundphysicians.com](http://www.soundphysicians.com).