

Employers Centers of Excellence Network (ECEN)

Aligning Cost and Quality to Achieve Excellence in Surgical Care



Program Overview

With the guidance of the Pacific Business Group on Health (PBGH), a not-for-profit coalition of healthcare purchasers, several pioneering employers decided to use their collective influence and financial decisions to improve healthcare. Together, they built the Employers Centers of Excellence Network (ECEN), a travel surgery program for high variation, high cost, elective procedures. Launched on 1/1/2014, the ECEN travels patients from four participating employers to one of five meticulously qualified and selected Centers of Excellence (CoEs) for total joint replacement and spine procedures.

By contracting directly with a national network of CoEs through an episode-based bundled payment, the ECEN sends a signal to the market that employers expect high quality care, transparency and fair, predictable pricing.

Center Selection Process

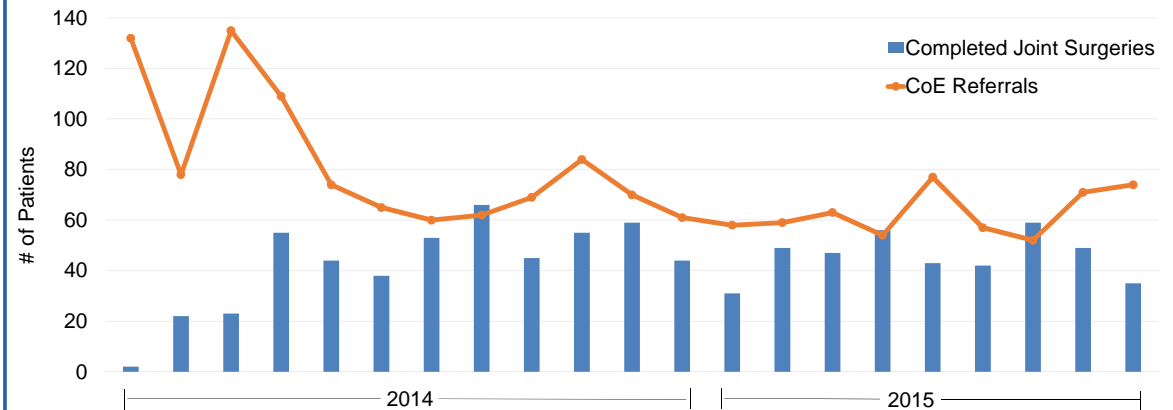
	Preliminary Review	Invited Request for Information	Team Assessment Call	Request for Proposals	In-person Site Visit	Selected
Number of Centers	175	55	22	17	9	5

PBGH initiated a partnership with third party administrator, Health Design Plus, a leader in the development and administration of CoE programs. Experts in value-based payment, medical care, patient safety and orthopedics created a multi-step evaluation process including a review of publicly available data, interviews with administrative, contracting and clinical teams, an extensive request for proposals submission and in-person site visits. Assessment and selection criteria are used to qualify both centers and specific surgeons.

175 centers were reviewed for possible inclusion in the network and five have been selected thus far. ECEN candidate centers submit data on 15 unique quality measures and must demonstrate the ability to:

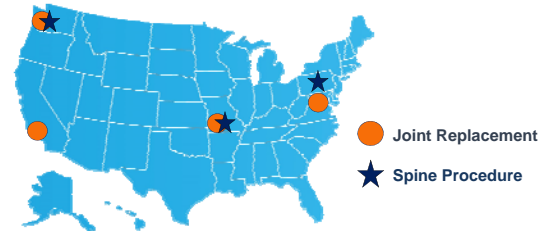
- Provide the highest quality clinical care
- Deliver an exceptional patient experience
- Practice evidence-based medicine
- Collaborate, share best practices and performance data
- Align with employer needs
- Support bundled payment design

ECEN Joint Replacement Utilization



Eligible patients are referred to CoEs for a remote review of their medical records to determine whether they are an appropriate candidate for surgery. Approximately 15-20% of referrals are not clinically appropriate for surgery. CoEs are required to communicate their decision to the patient and home provider regardless of whether surgery is recommended.

Spine and Joint Network



- ★ Virginia Mason Medical Center
Seattle, WA
- ★ Kaiser Permanente Irvine Medical Center
Irvine, CA
- ★ Mercy Hospital, Springfield
Springfield, MO
- ★ Johns Hopkins Bayview Medical Center
Baltimore, MD
- ★ Geisinger Medical Center
Danville, PA

Bundled Case Rate

The episode-based bundled payment the ECEN negotiates with each participating center is all inclusive, meaning that all procedure-related services received during the approximately 10 days patients spend in the CoE city are included. The comprehensive bundles are designed to promote care coordination and patient satisfaction. Competitive pricing allows employers to provide the ECEN benefit at no cost to the patient while controlling their healthcare spend. Early analysis indicates that ECEN cases cost up to 20% less than similar cases covered by health plan carriers.

With over 500 completed joint replacement cases in the first year of the program (2014), the ECEN has demonstrated employees' willingness to travel in order to access high quality, low cost care, and is an opportunity for employers and providers to show leadership in advocating for value-based health care purchasing.