



# STREAMLINED SOLUTIONS ACHIEVE SIGNIFICANT COST SAVINGS

Covenant High Plains Surgery Center selects Surgical Notes for transcription, coding, and document management solutions

## Corporate Profile

Covenant  High Plains Surgery Center

Lubbock, TX

Multi-specialty Outpatient Care

2 ASCs, 11 Operating Rooms & 3 Procedure Rooms

## Facility Overview

When it comes to IT solution vendors in an ASC, more is not necessarily better than less.

That was the sense of John M. Sautter Jr., MBA, CASC, Administrator of Covenant High Plains Surgery Center located in Lubbock, Texas. This ambulatory surgery center is comprised of two separate facilities located just a few blocks apart. Considered one entity, the multi-specialty centers average about 12,000 cases annually, with procedures performed in 11 operating rooms

and 3 procedure rooms. They've been staples in their community, with one facility operating for approximately 28 years and the other going into its 11th year. Once competitors, the two ASCs merged in August 2015.

The single entity relied on multiple systems for its transcription, coding, and medical records scanning. The dictation system vendor was a local company while the coding company was based outside of Texas.

**SNChart**

Web-based Transcription & Management System

**SNCoder**

Full-service Coding & Coding Audits

**ScanChart ASC**

Chart Automation & Document Management Tool

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- Chuck Meisel,  
Vice President of Sales,  
Surgical Notes

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"There was nothing wrong per se with the companies we were working with or systems we were using at the time, but we thought there might be an opportunity to streamline processes and achieve a cost savings," Sautter says.

## A Chance Meeting Uncovers Improvement Opportunities

While at the 2015 Ambulatory Surgery Center Association (ASCA) annual meeting, Sautter met representatives of Surgical Notes. Chuck Meisel, Vice President of Sales for Surgical Notes, recalls learning about Covenant High Plains' IT setup with multiple vendors.

"We immediately saw an opportunity to help the ASC improve its efficiency and save a lot of money in the process," Meisel says.

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Administrator,  
Covenant High Plains Surgery Center

Not long after the ASCA meeting, Meisel and another member of the Surgical Notes team visited Covenant High Plains. They further discussed with John how Surgical Notes could help the ASC achieve its objectives of reducing costs with streamlined operations without any change to their existing practice management system.

With information from Surgical Notes in hand, Sautter ran an analysis that compared the cost of transcription, coding, and medical charting services provided by Surgical Notes with what the ASC was paying at the time.

"I ran some historical information, factoring in our high case volume, and concluded that going with Surgical Notes was a direction that would save us a significant amount of money," Sautter says. "While cost savings was our top priority, also important was having all of the services with one company."

## Forming a Partnership

Before the end of 2015, Surgical Notes had implemented three of its solutions at Covenant High Plains: SNChart, a web-based transcription and management system; SNCoder, a full-service coding solution; and ScanChart ASC, a chart automation and document management solution.

The implementation process was very easy, Sautter recalls. "Surgical Notes had team members on site who were great to work with. Any transition from systems that have been in use for a long time will bring some hiccups, but we all anticipated that and worked through them together. Chuck and his team were always readily available to address questions."

Meisel adds, "John and his staff developed close relationships with us. If they had a question, they knew who to contact at Surgical Notes to get it resolved quickly. That remains true today."

## Tangible Benefits

Since Covenant High Plains switched its systems to Surgical Notes, Sautter says the improvements are quite apparent, especially when looking at the bottom line.

"We anticipate that by moving to Surgical Notes, we will achieve about \$75,000 in savings annually," he says. "We also saved money upfront when the implementation turned out to be less expensive than we anticipated. It's always nice to come in under budget."

The savings alone would have made the switch worthwhile, but partnering with Surgical Notes has delivered a number of other across-the-board improvements.

“We were able to eliminate a lot of the manual faxing of schedules and operative reports necessary for working with their former coding company,” Meisel says. “That’s saved Covenant High Plains a lot of time and sped up their ability to bill, shortening that time frame by 2-3 days.”

The ASC’s physicians are benefitting from their operative reports transferring directly into ScanChart ASC and the use of electronic signatures. “Those were two big features John wanted for his doctors and we were able to deliver them,” Meisel says. “Like a lot of our other centers, I think they were surprised at how easy it was for their physicians to transition to our SNChart transcription service.”

Working with a single vendor has achieved the ASC’s desire to streamline operations, Sautter says. “Everything is simplified,” he says. “Our staff no longer have the burden of managing multiple entities. With Surgical Notes, we have one go-to contact, and a very responsive one at that. I can’t imagine not working with the Surgical Notes team.”

The partnership has been just as much of a rewarding experience for Surgical Notes, Meisel says. “John oversees a great ASC. He and his team are readily available references. You know a partnership is going really well when the customer is happy to speak on your behalf.”

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