



## **Five Simple Strategies to Align Anesthesia and Surgical Teams**

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Hospital operating rooms are busy places. Schedules are maintained around the clock, with both scheduled and non-scheduled patients moving in and out of surgical suites, and the right clinical experts brought in to work cases based on what each individual patient needs. Staffing requirements are comprehensive and diverse, but with a need for collaboration, teamwork and a commitment to quality remaining constant. Egos need to be checked at the door, with a reminder that every staff member who is involved in a surgical case ultimately has the same goal ... putting the patient first.

As the Anesthesia Practice Director at Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center in Missouri, I see first-hand, every day, just how important it is for our anesthesia providers to be *part* of the operating room team. Our Chief of Anesthesia and Chief of Surgery are connected and committed to working together, and as a result, our entire OR operation runs smoothly. Communication lines remain open, problem solving is collaborative and done without blaming or finger pointing, we operate efficiently from a cost standpoint, and both our physician and patient satisfaction ratings are strong.

Together, our clinical leaders work together to optimize outcomes, using five simple strategies:

1. **Set expectations.** Simply put, our Chief of Anesthesia is clear on what our Chief of Surgery needs and expects, and vice versa.
2. **Voice concerns.** When our OR staff and anesthesia providers do face challenges or have differences in opinion about how to resolve an operational issue, the Chiefs come together to discuss it quickly and in a way that considers all possible solutions.
3. **Regroup and reconnect.** The Chiefs meet on a regular basis to simply regroup and reconnect, even when no issues or problems are present. Maintaining an open and collaborative relationship is important, and having regular “touch points” keeps those communication lines open.
4. **Identify best practices.** Our Chiefs make time to talk about what is working well and also where we have opportunities to improve moving forward. They share those insights with the entire OR team and ask for input from others about changes that we should consider, based on our successes and failures.
5. **Create processes.** In many cases, leaders come up with good ideas but don't put thought into how to actually implement them. Our Chiefs think about processes and what it will actually take to turn ideas into reality. They consider timelines and who the new processes will ultimately touch or impact, as well as what adjustments need to be made to implement successfully.

We are proud of how well our operating room team works, and that anesthesia providers are great contributors to our success. Working together as a single unit has allowed all of us to provide a more efficient, higher quality and patient focused clinical care model.

### ***About Robin Coats and Clinical Colleagues, Inc.***

*Robin Coats is an Anesthesia Practice Director for Clinical Colleagues, Inc., responsible for oversight of the anesthesia service line for Poplar Bluff Regional Medical Center in Poplar Bluff, MO. To learn more about Clinical Colleagues visit [ccianesthesia.com](http://ccianesthesia.com).*