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Surgical Brainstorm

Patient transport and transfer products, as well as mobile surgical equipment such as carts, need to be safe and efficient for your surgical staff and patients. Here, we asked manufacturers of surgical mobility products: What should OR staff members consider when purchasing this equipment?

Shannon Kennedy
Director of Marketing
Stanley InnerSpace

1. Involve the end-user in the purchasing decision. This is an obvious consideration that is often overlooked.

When looking for surgical supply carts, consider the end-users, give them an opportunity to voice their needs and act on their requests. This will allow the department to appropriately match need with functionality. For instance, a mobile wire rack with bins won't fit the bill if the end-user is looking for a cart to store smaller, general nursing supplies. Ergonomics, work space and the ability to maintain eye contact with the patient are characteristics of a point-of-care cart. Every surgical supply and procedure cart is designed for a specific application and should be treated as such.

2. Standardization. Look to standardize mobile supply carts to improve staff efficiencies. If a patient bedside cart is selected, work to make every cart in every room identical. Each drawer, each tray, and each divider should be identical and labeled for quick supply retrieval. Standardization reduces confusion, error and inventory waste. Standardization also reduces

amount of time it takes for a new staff member to become acclimated to a new environment.

3. Security. The ability to apply the correct level of mobile cart security is of growing importance. Understand your department's goals and risk level depending on how and where the cart is used throughout the day. Do you have meds that need to be on a double locking system? Do you want a manual lock or do you prefer keyless entry? Do you want staff members to use their existing proximity cards/badges to unlock a cart? How do you plan to administer cart security and enroll new users? Consider vendors that have a range of possibilities that can be tailored to meet your supply cart needs.



Michael Haeusler
Surgical Workplaces, Director of Marketing
MAQUET

1. Workflow efficiency in the OR. OR tables with interchangeable table tops change the entire workflow of the OR. An OR table system with an interchangeable table top enables the OR team to prepare a patient for surgery out of the operating theater. The support column for the table remains in the OR, and the table top can be detached and moved (with patient) via a mobile transporter. When one operation has been completed, the system is easily cleaned and the next patient is transported into the OR quickly. Patient repositioning and inter-operative time are reduced to help maximize OR efficiency.

2. Safety is improved by reducing the number of patient lifts. Using system tables with detachable tops and transporter systems decreases the need to transfer the patient from stretcher to bed since the table top becomes the OR table surface. Safe patient transfer in the OR is now accomplished with one person. Eliminating the use of a stretcher can

potentially reduce two patient lifts per procedure, which in turn could potentially reduce the risk of injury from lifting patients.

3. Flexibility is crucial for today's surgery demands. Use of dedicated table tops support all surgical disciplines from general surgery through to the sophisticated requirements of new hybrid ORs. Even highly specialized orthopedic procedures are easily accomplished with the use of many accessory devices—from spinal-frame accessories to MIS Hip devices. Use of dedicated table tops provides the flexibility needed for specialized procedures while facilitating patient mobility. This also eliminates the need for specialized tables in dedicated ORs.



SURGICAL BRAINSTORM: SURGICAL MOBILITY

Betsy Mikalacki

Marketing

TransMotion Medical, Inc.

The top three considerations surgical professionals should make when purchasing surgical mobility equipment are: safe patient handling, optimal patient throughput and maximizing surgical space.

1. Safe patient handling. To retain a healthy nursing staff and meet Joint Commission National Patient Safety Goal #9 (reduce the risk of patient harm resulting from falls), implement equipment that achieves safe patient handling. This can be accomplished with mobile surgical stretcher-chairs. Motorized positioning from chair to stretcher, allows surgical outpatients to go from pre-op to surgery to post-op on one surface—eliminating the need to transfer or manually position the patient. This reduces the likelihood of Workers' Compensation costs associated with staff lifting injuries. In addition, the elimination of transfers greatly reduces patient fall risk.

2. Optimal patient throughput. It's simple—time is money. If more outpatients can be moved through surgery safely, more revenue can be made. How is this achieved? Reduce patient transfers. Currently, surgical staff perform an average of three transfers per case. Multiply this with the

number of surgeries performed at your facility each year. That's a considerable amount of time spent transferring patients! Take surgery to the next level by purchasing stretcher-chairs to eliminate transfers. One patient, one surface from admission to discharge. By eliminating transfers both patient throughput and revenue is increased, thus netting a return on investment that is measured in months, not years.

3. Maximizing surgical space. Maximize surgical space by utilizing mobile equipment that has multiple uses and requires less space. The small footprint of stretcher-chairs is making a large impression in the outpatient surgery market. In the upright position, a stretcher-chair requires half the space than a traditional stretcher. It is also easier to navigate through hallways and other close quarters. Yet, at the push of a button, it converts to a full-length stretcher for surgical procedures.



Kevin Mortesen

Vice President of Marketing
Capsa Solutions

1. Each facility and staff has a different set of needs when considering mobility products. What's most important is that you **work with suppliers who are in tune with the pairing of product with purpose.** For example, is a plastic cart better for you, or aluminum? What type of technology do you need? More often than not, entry management system needs are driven by state compliance guidelines, the proposed use of the equipment, tracking needs, etc. All of that must be taken in to account when considering a cart purchase, so first and foremost know your "rules" and find professional partners that will help meet those qualifications while addressing specific utilization requirements. It's no good to be compliant if the cart doesn't work for you and certainly a problem if you aren't compliant.

2. **Space availability and the need for mobility** are other important factors. The largest cart is not always best, particularly if you are moving the equipment from suite to suite.

Karen Almdale

Product Coordinator
Armstrong Medical
Industries

Storage space, locking options and lightweight/easy maneuverability are three very important topics to consider when purchasing mobile surgical carts.

1. **The storage options should be versatile.** Available space must accommodate the needs of each specialty. Having multiple drawer sizes to choose from and a variety of tray and divider systems helps to keep supplies organized and easily at-hand.

2. Depending on the set-up of the OR suite, these carts may be moved from room to room for procedures as well as for possible restocking. This brings up the question of the **weight of the cart.** An aluminum cart is 40 percent lighter than a steel cart. The aluminum cart is easier to push, turn and stop, which helps to avoid injuries to patients, visitors, nurses and doctors. In addition, the aluminum cart won't rust.

3. **Locking options on the cart** are also something to take into consideration. Carts may be holding medications and expensive surgical instruments that need to be locked up. Depending on the use of the cart, think about various locking options. You may want a key lock, a push-button lock or an auto-locking cart (with or without a prox reader). The push-button and the auto-locking carts come with a manual key override to bypass the push-button or electronic system if needed.



3. While that is true, you'll also want to consider **storage and drawer configuration.** Again, working with your selected supplier is key to determining the appropriate equipment. They shouldn't direct you to a catalog and tell you to pick it out. A consultative approach will more often than not result in the proper equipment filling your space, factoring in longevity and the overall value proposition offered by the product lines.

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SURGICAL BRAINSTORM: SURGICAL MOBILITY

Katie Kramer

Marketing Communication Manager
HoverTech International

1. Patient and caregiver safety. The right transfer equipment can make all the difference in providing a safer surgical environment for staff and patients. When choosing surgical mobility equipment for lateral patient transfers, primary consideration should be given to the level of safety the product offers for the caregiver and the patient. Lateral transfer

devices can dramatically reduce the force needed to move a patient, which protects staff's backs. But, not all lateral transfer devices are created equally. Look for products that protect patients as well, and choose one that reduces bumping, bruising and skin

shear. Know the differences between

friction-reducing, air-assisted and mechanical transfer devices and let your staff trial them to determine which is perceived as the "friendliest" to use. After all, the transfer device that will save more backs is the one that is used consistently.

2. Infection control and efficiency. Make your equipment work for you. Many of today's transfer products are designed with the OR in mind. Look for transfer devices that offer superior infection control and are compatible with the surgical environment, including the room layout, equipment and procedures. Some devices can remain beneath the patient during procedures, making post-op transfers more efficient and ultimately improving room turn-over time. To address infection control concerns, transfer products that can easily be cleaned and disinfected are also important in the OR. Single-patient use or double-coated devices further address the needs of the surgical environment.

3. Cost-effectiveness and flexibility. To make the best investment, ensure that the transfer equipment can effectively accommodate a wide range of patient weights and sizes. In doing so, you'll be protecting both the caregivers performing the transfer and the patient. Elect equipment that can help staff to safely move patients in the bariatric population, who may weigh up to 700 or 800 pounds. While your patient population may not near those weights on a daily basis, an unforeseen or emergency case could require your staff to perform transfers that push the safety boundaries. Being well-prepared for difficult transfers ultimately translates into long-term cost savings for the facility in the way of reduced patient and caregiver injuries and their resultant costs.

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