

Physicians Endoscopy

Our Commitment to the GI Physician

BY BARRY TANNER

Physicians Endoscopy (PE), like the healthcare market itself, is constantly evolving. In fact, the only constant in our business seems to be change, and the pace of that change ebbs and flows almost continuously. In the roughly twelve years since the company's formation, PE has transformed from a very small group of only a few people with fresh ideas about how to partner with and help GI physicians, into what is now a widely recognized team of nearly sixty people, expert in the field. They not only embrace the original concepts of partnering with physicians, but have greatly expanded upon and enhanced those founding principles to enable PE to deliver a quality and quantity of service that is unmatched in our market niche. The entire PE team deserves all of the credit for the progress that has been made, and I am grateful just to be a part of the team and this great success story.

Several years ago, we decided to create a journal that would be dedicated to the business of GI focused ambulatory surgery centers, as well as the GI practices. That journal is of course *EndoEconomics™*. *EndoEconomics* has been a terrific forum for a broad array of experts in many different aspects of the business of gastroenterology to present ideas, products, techniques, strategies, as well as to monitor regulatory and new business developments. *EndoEconomics* is one small yet important initiative of PE that we believe has helped us to serve the GI community. It is also an important part of PE's story of growth and leadership in the industry.

Starting from one GI focused ASC, PE has successfully developed and managed eighteen single-specialty GI ASCs. In addition, we currently have eleven new facilities in various stages of development and a similar number of facilities that are just entering the development cycle. PE affiliated ASCs currently treat approximately 2,500 patients each week. Once the six newest facilities have been completed and become operational, that number is expected to swell to more than 3,300 patients each week. That translates into many lives being saved! Still, there is yet another very important aspect to our business that is also improving the quality of life for many people...rewarding employment.

Our partnered ASC facilities currently employ more than 400 nurses, technicians, patient service coordinators and other healthcare professionals. These are the people who together with our physician partners dedicate themselves to taking care of patients in a compassionate, respectful, and caring fashion every day. These businesses, these ASCs, and these jobs did not exist prior to the initiatives undertaken by PE and our physician partners. Over 400—and steadily growing—people have secured gainful and rewarding employment, an opportunity to use their talents to provide an important and meaningful service, and to take pride in doing so. Our ASCs, and the physicians and staff who



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work there, are an important and vital part of each local community.

Over the past twelve years, PE has evolved from partnering only with GI physicians to now regularly partnering with both GI physicians and hospitals. We've seen an evolution from a time that featured physicians, often out of necessity, taking more control over patient care, over quality care initiatives and over the efficiencies of care delivery by shunning the hospital and creating their own single-specialty focused ASC, to a new movement toward exploring more collaborative/cooperative care delivery in partnership with hospitals. This more recent trend would seem to be intertwined with the creation of Accountable Care Organizations (ACOs). Whatever the current or next trend may be, I am confident that continuing to stick to a few of our most basic founding principles will be important.

First – In any partnership, each partner needs to bring something of value to the continued success of the venture.

Second – We are in a service business and the quality of our services and the manner in which we deliver that service will always be the cornerstone of our success.

Third – The business of healthcare is all about quality, and quality will be measured and judged by many different constituents and from many different perspectives. All are vital. Regulators, patients, payers, colleagues and those who are merely guests in our facilities are all entitled to judge the quality of our care and the quality with which we deliver it.

Fourth – Our biggest investment will always be in people and therefore it is critically important to remember that our greatest assets walk out the door and go home each night. Principles one, two and three are all dependent upon this fourth principle.


As change in our industry has been almost non-stop throughout the past twenty years, it seems likely that the next ten years will host a period of accelerated change. Historical growth in the cost of healthcare is unsustainable. I think that we all realize that. As an industry, we need to do a better job of delivering the right care the first time, eliminating waste, duplication and inefficiency, emphasizing early detection and preventative care, and rewarding instead of penalizing cost saving care initiatives such as that provided by ASCs. I believe that ASCs can and will continue to provide an important service within the healthcare delivery continuum, and I also believe that PE is extremely well positioned to be able to help GI physicians and hospitals deliver the highest quality care in the most cost-efficient, patient-friendly and safest environment possible. PE's single-specialty focus, our hands-on approach to the business of GI ASC management, our deep expertise and ability to add on-going value in regulatory, clinical, reimbursement, financial and human resource management (just to mention a few) will enable us to provide GI physicians, hospitals and others with the best advice, guidance, strategy and execution to navigate this changing healthcare landscape.

I am energized by the prospect of change and secure in the knowledge that we have the right team of people who have the desire, the passion and the expertise to make a difference.

Barry Tanner, CPA, President, Chief Executive Officer. Barry joined PE in July 1999. Barry co-authored the company's business plan along with Karen Sablyak, CFO. Today, Barry shares responsibility for the company's partnership development activities, as well as being primarily responsible for the company's strategic direction, and services development while also sharing in the day-to-day management and governance of several of the company's partnered facilities.

Prior to joining PE, Mr. Tanner served as Chief Financial Officer of Navix Radiology Systems, Inc., a physician practice management company based in Miami, Florida. Mr. Tanner co-founded Navix Radiology Systems, Inc. (a venture capital backed company) and was primarily responsible for the development of that company's business plan. Over a period of four years, Mr. Tanner contributed to building the company from zero to over \$75 million in revenues, including the acquisition of seven professional radiology practices and orchestrating the acquisition and financing of a major diagnostics company. Functioning as the Chief Financial Officer and Chief Operating Officer of Navix, Mr. Tanner was also responsible for all day-to-day operations of the company.

Prior to founding Navix, Mr. Tanner served as Chief Operating Officer of HealthInfusion, Inc. (NASDAQ – HINF), a Miami based provider of home intravenous therapy services. Before joining HealthInfusion, Mr. Tanner was primarily involved in the financial services industry. Mr. Tanner successfully orchestrated the financial and operational turnaround of two publicly traded companies within that industry having previously co-founded (in 1977) and successfully operated another publicly traded financial services company, Scientific Leasing, Inc., for over ten years. Barry can be reached at btanner@endocenters.com.



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