



## Surgery nurse services

*Our surgery nurse services help injured employees prepare their mind and body before surgery, and provide them with educational tools and guidance to improve their recovery.*

Workers' compensation claims involving surgery typically cost nine times more than non-surgical claims and take longer to close. When an injured employee is engaged in their recovery, before and after surgery, it can reduce the likelihood of costly complications, improve recovery times and facilitate a safe, healthy return to work.

Being told that surgery is needed can be a chilling experience for most people. Often, surgery is complicated by pre-existing conditions such as obesity, diabetes or hypertension. Our surgery nurse services help manage high cost surgical claims more effectively by proactively engaging injured employees. This unique solution provides dedicated nurse resources and technology to help these employees take steps to prepare for surgery and improve their recovery.

When an operation is authorized, the surgery nurse will contact the injured employee to assess their health literacy, set expectations and identify any red flags that could impact their recovery. The nurse will also send the employee's treating physician a letter to introduce the program and notify them about the exercises and well-being guidance.

### How it works

#### Pre-habilitation

Using their computer or mobile device, the employee will receive brief lessons carefully selected to improve pre-operative physical strength, nutrition and well-being, and address issues related to smoking cessation and home readiness. The patient's progress is monitored and encouraged by an experienced surgery nurse who holds a certification as a case manager.

#### Rehabilitation

The nurse documents strengthening exercises and improvements, and keeps the claims examiner informed about the employee's progress and compliance. The exercises and well-being guidance continue after surgery to support recovery efforts. The nurse also screens the employee for risks in areas such as opioid use, delayed recovery and the perception of serious pain.

### Key results

After comparing surgical claims with and without our surgery nurse program, claims that included it achieved the following results for clients:

14% lower physical therapy costs

13% increase in return to work

27% faster return to work



## Success stories

This pre-habilitation/rehabilitation model is providing impressive results for employers and injured employees. The powerful combination of clinical intervention and innovative technology is lowering claim costs, improving outcomes and helping employees return to work sooner.

- Rita, a 48-year-old patient, was preparing for outpatient surgery when surgery nurse, Paula, was assigned to support her case. Paula learned during their initial discussion that Rita had a heart attack at age 44, which raised concerns – pre-op cardiac testing had not yet been done for clearance, and this patient with heart attack history was scheduled for outpatient instead of inpatient surgery. Paula contacted the surgeon, and he immediately scheduled testing with a cardiologist and changed the procedure to inpatient. Although Rita had been very nervous about the surgery, she said that the support from Paula, as well as the relaxation exercises, really eased her anxiety.
- Jen was approaching surgery with extreme anxiety and dread. Her attorney would not agree to telephonic case management intervention, but was intrigued by the idea of surgery nurse engagement (something he had never heard about before) and allowed contact. Jen said that the mindfulness sessions helped her learn to relax and also deal with post-op pain. In fact, she now

prefers mindfulness meditation over pain medication, because mindfulness keeps her feeling good and the medication makes her feel foggy and unpleasant. She noted how much power she has found in utilizing tools that are easily accessible on her phone to stay engaged in her recovery, and commented on how they keep her motivated and feeling better.

Our surgery nurse solution helps injured employees facing surgery to be better prepared physically and mentally, and to confidently steer themselves toward a faster recovery.

## About Careworks

At the heart of any organization are its people. When one of your employees is out of work for illness or injury, Careworks is there, ready to help them on their return to health, work and productivity. By providing the right care and coordination solutions — from clinical case management to networks and support — along with the best treatment and cost oversight, we're driving better outcomes for your injured workers. And that means better outcomes for you.

*To learn more about our managed care solutions, visit [CAREWORKS.COM](https://www.careworks.com)*