

News Release

American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities, Inc. (AAAASF)
American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities International, (AAAASFI)
Medicare Deeming Authority for Outpatient Physical Therapy
Medicare Deeming Authority for Rural Health Clinics

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AAAASF addresses patient safety in outpatient facilities *Centers are highly regulated to ensure quality and safety*

GURNEE, IL — The [American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities, Inc. \(AAAASF\)](http://www.aaaasf.org) is a nonprofit organization established in 1980 to promote patient safety in the outpatient setting. Patient safety is the sole mission of the organization. Its voluntary board of directors is comprised of numerous professors of surgery and anesthesiology, nurses and nurse anesthetists and members of the business community.

“AAAASF is sympathetic to the recent unfortunate and highly publicized case involving an outpatient surgical facility,” said Dr. Geoffrey Keyes, AAAASF board president. “Safety is our primary concern in delivery of outpatient surgical care. We constantly assess surgery center performance through the inspection process and Internet submitted data from our facilities to show outpatient facilities are safe and convenient for patients of all ages.”

- Since 1999, AAAASF has collected aggregate data on all adverse events that occur in its accredited facilities, which is stored in its data collection system. Periodic reporting is mandatory for all AAAASF facilities. There is no other database with this type of extensive statistical data for analysis of outpatient surgery procedures and outcomes.
- Analysis of data of more than 12 million cases has demonstrated a low rate of mortality with an incidence of death in about one of 50,000 procedures performed. This incidence of death is mostly due to pulmonary embolism, a blood clot to the lung that can occur in any postoperative patient regardless of whether the surgery was performed in a hospital or outpatient facility. Another large percentage of the deaths that occurred were in patients who die from their disease, unrelated to surgery, such as those patients who suffered from chronic renal failure. Deaths occurred intraoperatively at a rate of one in 478,000 procedures.
- The data demonstrates low infection rates of one in 2,400 procedures. No deaths were attributed as a direct result of infection.

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“When tragic events occur, during or after surgery, they may be related to a failure to comply with our existing safety standards,” Keyes said. “Outpatient surgery is safe for patients of all ages, provided that the surgeon and anesthesiologist have assessed their medical suitability to the outpatient setting. Our accreditation standards for Medicare and non-Medicare facilities are designed to ensure safe care. AAAASF believes in discussing the risks and benefits during a patient's assessment and ensuring the proper clinical staff and equipment are in the room when that procedure is performed.”

In addition, AAAASF suggests the following safety guidelines that patients should follow prior to any surgery:

- Patients should be their own health care advocates. Prior to surgery, make certain the surgeon is board certified in the specialty for which one is seeking care and has privileges at a hospital near the facility.
- Patients should make sure the facility where the procedure will be performed is accredited.
- Patients should also ask about the anesthesia care plan, staff certifications and hospital privileges, as well as a facility's emergency protocol.

Keyes added, “Limiting outpatient surgery may not only needlessly raise costs and lower access but data shows it would not improve safety. Although there is always room for improvement, our data of more than 12 million procedures has demonstrated the efficacy of outpatient surgical care.”

About the AAAASF

The [American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities, Inc. \(AAAASF\)](http://www.aaaasf.org) was established in 1980 to develop an accreditation program to standardize and improve the quality of medical and surgical care in outpatient facilities while assuring the public that patient safety is top priority in an accredited facility.

Today, more than 2,100 outpatient facilities are accredited by AAAASF, one of the largest not-for-profit accrediting organizations in the United States. Surgeons, legislators, state and national health agencies and patients acknowledge that AAAASF stands alone as the program setting the "gold standard" for quality patient care. For more information, visit <http://www.aaaasf.org> or [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).