
Preparing for Success: Confluence Health Opens New Pre-Anesthesia Testing (PAT) Clinic to Strengthen Surgical Care for the Region

Wenatchee, WA: Yesterday afternoon, Confluence Health celebrated the grand opening of its new Pre-Anesthesia Testing (PAT) Clinic with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, marking a major advancement in surgical preparation designed to improve patient safety, reduce complications, and strengthen overall community health. Located within the Confluence Health Hospital Central Campus, the first patient is anticipated to receive care at the new facility starting February 9th.

“The PAT Clinic provides patients with comprehensive medical evaluations and education before surgery, helping them understand expectations, address underlying health concerns, and reduce risks that can affect surgical outcomes,” explained Kelly Allen, chief nursing officer at Confluence Health. “When a patient is preparing for an upcoming surgery, clinic nurses and medical providers conduct thorough assessments, preparing patients for safer, more successful procedures. This work with patients varies for each person’s needs but includes reviewing medical history, essential diagnostic tests, medications, and evaluating and reducing risk factors as much as possible.”

Improving health before surgery is critical since conditions such as uncontrolled diabetes, high blood pressure, tobacco use, or weight-related concerns can negatively affect outcomes and recovery. The clinic also helps patients gather and organize test results from other facilities to ensure their surgical team has all the information needed.

“The new clinic also uses Enhanced Recovery After Surgery (ERAS) protocols, which have been standard practice for more than a decade and are proven to shorten hospital stays, decrease postoperative pain and the need for pain-relieving medication, reduce complications and readmissions, and increase patient satisfaction,” said Liz Dittbrender, vice president of perioperative and procedural services at Confluence Health. “With this new dedicated PAT Clinic, Confluence Health can fully deploy ERAS in a focused environment where staff can deliver consistent, evidence-based preparation for every surgical patient.”

Common tests performed in the PAT Clinic include complete blood counts (CBCs), urinalysis, complete medical profiles, X-rays, and electrocardiograms (EKGs). If a patient needs care or testing, the clinic works directly with providers to ensure follow-up is coordinated before the surgery date.

“This preparation not only minimizes delays or cancellations caused by unaddressed medical risks but also helps reduce anxiety for patients by getting them as prepared as possible for their surgery with all their questions answered and needs met,” added Dittbrender. “A PAT clinic also lowers preoperative admission time and helps to reduce the overall length of stay. These benefits support both patients and the health system.”

“The opening of the new clinic represents the fulfillment of work and collaboration of numerous teams across Confluence Health who contributed their expertise through planning sessions, site-walk evaluations, workflow design, and clinical review,” commented Dr. Andrew Jones, CEO of Confluence Health. “Patients across North Central Washington will benefit immediately from PAT Clinic services. By reducing infection risks, shortening hospital stays, improving physical readiness, speeding recovery, and reducing postoperative pain, the PAT Clinic will play a vital role in elevating the quality of surgical care throughout the region. Its focus on proactive preparation also aligns directly with our mission to deliver high-quality, accessible care close to home and to support better long-term health outcomes for the community we serve.”

About Confluence Health

Confluence Health serves the largest geographic region of any healthcare system in Washington State, covering over 12,000 square miles of Okanogan, Grant, Douglas, and Chelan counties. Confluence Health is one of only two locally-lead healthcare systems in the state with the purpose of maintaining availability and access to high-quality, cost-effective healthcare services for North Central Washington. The Confluence Health Board of Directors provides governance for Confluence Health and includes nine community board members and six physician board members.

For More Information

Adam MacDonald, *Corporate Communications Program Manager*

adam.macdonald@ConfluenceHealth.org

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