



Pennsylvania Surgical News

News & Updates for the Keystone and Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapters American College of Surgeons

February 2021

February is here and Punxsutawney Phil predicted six more weeks of winter on February 2nd. This tradition always seems humorous to me. Each year on February 2nd, the calendar indicates spring arrives in six weeks. Does it really matter if Phil sees, or does not see his shadow? Spring always arrives sometime in March.

Dr. Shannon Marie Foster, President of the Keystone Chapter brings readers another insightful article in this month's *Meanderings of A Wandering Surgeon*. Check out her column on page 2.

Representatives from the four Pennsylvania ACS Chapters and members of the ACS Government Relations division convened on February 10th to discuss legislative issues introduced since the beginning of the new legislative session. Read more in the Legislative Report on page 4.

Still time to remit your 2021 membership dues! Your financial support helps the chapters continue to focus on representing you and the surgical community through educational programs, legislative advocacy, and networking opportunities. If you have misplaced your renewal invoice, contact your Chapter office (info@kc-accs.org or info@mp-accs.org). Dues can be easily remitted online using a credit or debit card.

Keystone and Metro Philly Councils thank all our members who have remitted their dues, and those

who have added a voluntary contribution, for your continued support and engagement.

Residents and Medical Students have an opportunity to submit their Case Review studies to the Keystone Chapter for the Case Review Competition. Additional details and a link to submit your work can be found on page 3.

Metro Philly Chapter is hosting a **Fellowship 101 Webinar** March 16th. This 90-minute session will pair residents and medical students with Fellows, Program Directors, and other members of the surgical community to answer questions and help provide valuable information as you begin the process of selecting your Fellowship training program. Registration is required. Additional details and a link to register can be found on page 3.

Do not miss forget - Renew your membership today! Not a current active member? We look forward to welcoming you to the family soon!

REMINDER: State Board of Medicine Renewal Deadline Extended

The State Board of Medicine extended the filing deadline for licensure renewal from December 31, 2020 to March 31, 2021. The extension also applies to retired and inactive licenses that were reactivated to assist with the COVID pandemic. Click [HERE](#) for additional details or visit the [PA State Board of Medicine](#).

Meanderings from A Wandering Surgeon

Shannon Marie Foster, MD, FACS
Keystone Chapter President



Greetings friends and colleagues –

I hope you continue to be well and safe.

When I was younger, I loved to write. Creative and free, a gift of the imagination to wander and wonder among words into places seen or only dreamt of, experience relationships and emotions in raw yet protected spaces, and choose the fate of my own inventions. What a gift! But the true gifts of the written word – privacy, empowerment to speak freely, and the time to express it – have become fleeting. Our words are now weighted and judged and rarely our own – from the varied notes of our work seen by administrators, billers, and the patients about whom they are written, to the emails that can be opened and critiqued by any supervisor, employer, or server, to the very intentional public dissemination of social media postings – all have made me afraid to truly write uninhibited, to share, to give an unveiled honest piece of myself. The use of words to criticize, hurt, and harm, and the unabashed willingness of so many to do so without pause, has pushed me ever farther from a desire to share anything other than that which is required.

My reluctance stems from fear. Do you notice that when you write something down, or type as most people prefer these days – it becomes real in a way that it is not when just a thought? The words take shape, solidify, and allow expansion into something more definite, yet simultaneously evolve into something beautifully ephemeral and subject to interpretation? That interpretation can lead to so much unintentional damage in this era. I think it is an act of vulnerability when honest words are

shared – but more so an act of strength - and that is courage. I'm inspired by courage.

When surgeons share personal experiences of burnout, resilience, anger management issues, surgical mistakes, conflicts with colleagues – moments of highest vulnerability - these are acts of courage. At these times, when a person bares themselves – do we judge? Sometimes. Learn? Hopefully. I think most often, we work to uplift, help, clarify, and give inspiration, pausing to consider our own history, experiences, needs and shortcomings as we actively choose to support and encourage others. Or at least I hope we do. I try. For those who cannot help but to be harsh – to react with vitriol and criticism – to hurt and to harm – we all continue to ask for better from you.

Thanks to all who have been vulnerable and lead us to places of health and healing – those who inspire with courage.

Shannon Marie Foster, MD, FACS, President of the Keystone Chapter. She also serves at the national level as a Governor-At-Large, Vice-Chair of Communications Pillar Outreach Group, liaison to both the Women in Surgery (WiS) and Trauma (CoT) Committees.

February Wellness Tip



Be your own friend instead of your harshest critic. Inwardly radiate the love that you so generously give to others. You are doing a lot, and you are doing it well, even if it may not always seem that way.

Keystone Chapter Case Review in Surgery Competition



Calling all Fellows-in-Training, Residents, and Medical Students. The Keystone Chapter is hosting a Case Review in Surgery competition, which kicked off on January 20th. Submissions are being accepted through March 19th. Top submissions will present their Case Review in a live, virtual format the week of April 26th.

Winning submissions will be eligible and submitted for publication consideration in the national and renown, now open-source ACS Case Reviews in Surgery.

Case Reviews in Surgery is an interesting, unique, peer-reviewed program addressing some of the most significant educational needs of practicing surgeons and surgery residents. The published case reviews will offer our members and the surgical community access to high-quality, in-depth analyses of actual surgical cases.

For additional information and to submit your Case Review for consideration visit the Keystone Chapter's website submission portal [\[Click Here\]](#).

Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapter Fellowship 101 Webinar

Choosing a Fellowship program is a huge step in your medical career. So many choices, so little time to research. The Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapter of the American College of Surgeons would like to help you make the best decision for the next chapter of your surgical career.

Join us on March 16th for our **Fellowship 101 Webinar**. This 90-minute session will bring together surgical Fellows and Program Directors from multiple specialties to answer your questions, provide information on the training programs, and share tips to help you determine the best surgical fellowship track for you.

Do not miss this opportunity to connect with specialty surgeons from across the Philadelphia area as you prepare to move into the next chapter of your surgical career.

The event kicks off at 6:00 PM, March 16th, with a keynote message. Registrants will then move to

surgical specialty breakrooms to meet and discuss the specialty programs with seasoned surgical specialists.

Not sure what specialty is calling you? During the session, you will be able to move from one breakroom to another. This will allow you to gather information on multiple specialty programs so you are able to make the best decision for YOU!

REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

Registration is open through March 10th!

We wish to thank our Premier Event Sponsor:





American College of Surgeons News & Updates



Clinical Congress 2021 is scheduled for October 24-28, 2021 in Washington, DC. The call for abstracts and videos is now open. Members are encouraged to start submitting your abstracts and videos today. **Deadline for submission is March 1, 2021.**

Abstracts and videos may be submitted for the following Clinical Congress programs:

- **Owen H. Wangensteen Scientific Forum:** [LEARN MORE](#)
- **Video-Based Education Sessions:** [LEARN MORE](#)
- **History of Surgery Poster Session:** [LEARN MORE](#)

All submissions must be received by 11:59 PM (CST) on Monday, March 1, 2021. The Committee do not accommodate or consider late abstract submissions.

ACS Joins Stakeholder Letters on Medicare Sequestration

The ACS signed on to [two letters](#) to House and Senate leadership requesting that the Medicare Sequester COVID Moratorium Act (H.R. 315) be included in upcoming must-pass COVID-19 relief legislation. The legislation would extend the delay of sequestration-related payment cuts, required by the Budget Control Act of 2011, through the end of the declared COVID-19 public health emergency.

Congress had previously delayed the 2 percent spending cut until March 21 as part of the spending bill enacted in December 2020. Extending the moratorium on sequestration-related cuts is supported by a broad group of physician and health care organizations.

Call to Action: Write your members of Congress today and urge your elected officials to call on House and Senate leadership to [include H.R. 315 in the next COVID-19 relief package](#).

For more information about sequestration, contact Amelia Suermann, ACS Congressional Lobbyist, at asuermann@facs.org.

Legislative Bill Monitoring Activity in PA

The ACS and your local Chapters continue to monitor legislative activity both on the Federal and State level. The new legislative session has begun, and we are currently monitoring [11 state bills](#).

[\[CLICK HERE\]](#) to view the complete list of all Federal and State legislation being monitored across the country by ACS.

Call to Action: Even though in-person visits continue to be restricted, an introductory phone call or email to your legislator opens the door for a discussion on healthcare issues. Most legislators will admit they have limited experience with healthcare issues. Having an expert to connect with when they have questions is critical to making sure you, your practice, and your patients are well represented. Not sure who your representative is? Click [Here](#) and use the “Find Your Legislator” search.

Trouble Sleeping or Wake Up Still Tired? Here Are Some Helpful Tips to Get You The ZZZZ's You Need



Stress, fatigue, long hours, and trying to balance work, life, and family, will eventually rob everyone of a restful night's sleep preventing you from maintaining your well-being. A recent article in *CNN Health* provides helpful tips to a better night's sleep.

1. **Optimize your sleeping area.** Temperature should be cool, between 60-67 degrees Fahrenheit. Avoid screens before bed. Lights from laptops, phones, and TVs can wake up your brain and alter your sleep cycle.
2. **Establish a schedule.** It is important to go to sleep and wake at the same time each day. Not an easy task for surgeons, but attempting to build a routine will increase a restful sleep pattern.
3. **Exercise daily.** Even 10 minutes of an aerobic exercise can improve your sleep. Don't exercise right before bedtime.
4. **Avoid certain foods and drinks right before bedtime.** Avoiding stimulants like nicotine or coffee and even alcohol (yes, it's a myth that alcohol will help you sleep better). Avoid heavy or spicy meals at least two hours before bedtime. If you are hungry, try a banana or nuts to satisfy your cravings.
5. **Take shorter naps.** An occasional short (45 minutes or less) nap is beneficial to re-energize and rejuvenate your well-being.

Some individuals find the use of a weighted blanket provide a more restful, sound sleep. Weighted blankets have been used since the late 1990's by

special needs educators and occupational therapists to help patients feel relaxed. The theory behind weighted blankets, according to Dr. Raj Dasgupta (assistant professor of clinical medicine at Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California), is the weighted blanket provides a deep pressure stimulation, a feeling that resembles a "firm, but gentle, squeeze or holding sensation". This feeling is said to trigger feelings of relaxation and calm. Although research on its effectiveness has not been extensively studied, Dr. Dasgupta found those using a weighted blanket for a per of one year reported better sleep maintenance, higher daytime activity level, remission of insomnia symptoms and a decrease in symptoms of anxiety, depression, and fatigue. You can read the full article [HERE](#).

Microaggressions Happen in Medical School. Here's How to Stop Them

An AMA Innovations in Medical Education Webinar features an in-depth look at microaggressions in medical education, their adverse impact, and potential remedies. A recording of the webinar is available in the resources area of the [AMA Accelerating Change in Medical Education Community](#) (registration required).

Defining microaggressions - Racial microaggressions are verbal or behavioral indignities that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults. They can be either conscious or unconscious. Either way, the results are harmful. Fighting them requires self-awareness of the part of faculty members, said Dr. Heron, associate dean for community engagement, equity, and inclusion at Emory University School of Medicine.

Swipe through the [AMA Instagram post](#) to learn more about common microaggressions in the health care setting, and see what you can do to address, interrupt, and challenge these slights.

To read the full article from the AMA, click [\[HERE\]](#)

Increasing Diversity in Surgery by Enhancing Equity and Inclusion in the Surgical Learning Environment

With the continuing exploration of diversity, equity, and inclusion-based *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons* articles by members of the Resident and Associate Society of the ACS, this week focuses on DEI as it relates to the lives and careers of surgical trainees. In "[Shoring up the pipeline: Increasing diversity in surgery by enhancing equity and inclusion in the surgical learning environment](#)," the authors describe the importance of increasing diversity in surgery at key phases of surgical training, including recruitment, retention, and promotion; identify how mentorship and sponsorship enhance equitable recruitment of surgeons; explore how policies that address both traditional and nontraditional family structures increase surgeon diversity and retention; and summarize how diverse role models help maintain an inclusive surgical culture beyond residency.

The article begins as follows:

Shoring up the pipeline: Increasing diversity in surgery by enhancing equity and inclusion in the surgical learning environment

by *Rebecca L. Williams-Karnesky, MD, PhD; Meghana V. Kashyap, MD, DIM&PH; Cathleen Courtney, MD; Caroline Park, MD, MPH; Kaitlin A. Ritter, MD; Rachel Hanke, MD; Joana Ochoa, MD; And Cheyenne C. Sonntag, MD (Keystone Chapter).*

Arguably delayed, the importance of diversity among health care professionals—that is, a broad representation of viewpoints, socioeconomic backgrounds, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, race, and ethnicity—and its impact on patient care and outcomes is increasingly

recognized. How do we, as surgeons, create and sustain a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive profession? Attempts to improve diversity often focus on increasing the number of diverse individuals admitted into the medical education system; however, it is evident that this approach alone is incomplete. Many diverse individuals are being lost to attrition along the way through leaks in the pipeline.

Evaluation of and improvements to the surgical learning environment can help identify and plug the attrition leaks encountered along the continuum of surgical training. A medical student's first impression of the surgical learning environment, often through student clerkships, influences whether they perceive themselves as "the kind of person who can be a surgeon." Ongoing immersion in the environment further exposes the student to overt and covert messages that either confirm or refute the perception of fitting the surgical mold.

Equity and inclusion are critical adjuncts to diversity in the surgical learning environment. Equity means being fair and impartial through assurances of equal access to the same opportunities. Equity is distinct from equality, which means treating everyone the same and is based on the unrealistic assumption that each individual is starting from the same point. Consider this example: not all surgeons are the same height. Standing at the operating room table to watch or retract can become uncomfortable when the table is too high or too low. Equality would dictate providing everyone with the same height step to reach the operating table regardless of need or surgeon height—thus, the six-foot surgeon, the four-foot surgeon, and the surgeon in a wheelchair all get the same six-inch step. Equity would entail raising or lowering the table, providing steps of varying height, or providing assistive equipment depending on individual needs.

Read the [Shoring up the pipeline: Increasing diversity in surgery by enhancing equity and inclusion in the surgical learning environment](#) on the [ACS Bulletin](#) website.

Why Join Your Local ACS Chapter?

Your local chapters are stronger than ever. The COVID pandemic created opportunities to expand how your local chapters provide educational content, networking, and resources. It also opened new collaboration efforts with other ACS chapters and surgical societies throughout Pennsylvania. If you are not a current member, or your membership is in lapse status, make a commitment today to join or renew.

NETWORKING



VISIBILITY



REPUTATION



LEARNING

It's not just who you know, it's who others know. Networking is powerful!

**Gain a say in what happens in healthcare through government advocacy efforts.
Have a voice!**

Stand out and get noticed in your community!

Raise your reputation through professional membership!

**Get a competitive edge over non-members with low cost and free training
and educational opportunities.**

JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP TODAY!