



American College of Surgeons

633 N Saint Clair St
Chicago, IL 60611-3211

Voice: 312/202-5000
Fax: 312/202-5001

e-mail: postmaster@facs.org
ACS Web site: <http://www.facs.org>

Officers

President

John L. Cameron, MD, FACS
Baltimore, MD

President-Elect

LaMar S. McGinnis, Jr., MD, FACS
Atlanta, GA

First Vice-President

Jack W. McAninch, MD, FACS
San Francisco, CA

Second Vice-President

Richard B. Reiling, MD, FACS
Charlotte, NC

First Vice-President-Elect

Kirby I. Bland, MD, FACS
Birmingham, AL

Second Vice-President-Elect

Karen E. Deveney, MD, FACS
Portland, OR

Secretary

Courtney M. Townsend, Jr., MD, FACS
Galveston, TX

Treasurer

Andrew L. Warshaw, MD, FACS
Boston, MA

Executive Director

Thomas R. Russell, MD, FACS
Chicago, IL

Chief Financial Officer

Gay L. Vincent, CPA
Chicago, IL

Board of Regents

Chair

L. D. Britt, MD, MPH, FACS
Norfolk, VA

Vice-Chair

A. Brent Eastman, MD, FACS
San Diego, CA

H. Randolph Bailey, MD, FACS
Houston, TX

Barbara L. Bass, MD, FACS
Houston, TX

Bruce D. Browner, MD, FACS
Farmington, CT

John L. Cameron, MD, FACS
Baltimore, MD

Martin B. Camins, MD, FACS
New York, NY

Richard J. Finley, MD, FACS
Vancouver, BC

Julie A. Freischlag, MD, FACS
Baltimore, MD

Barrett G. Haik, MD, FACS
Memphis, TN

Charles D. Mabry, MD, FACS
Pine Bluff, AR

Mark A. Malangoni, MD, FACS
Cleveland, OH

Robin S. McLeod, MD, FACS
Toronto, ON

Raymond F. Morgan, MD, FACS
Charlottesville, VA

Carlos A. Pellegrini, MD, FACS
Seattle, WA

Karl C. Podratz, MD, FACS
Rochester, MN

John T. Preskitt, MD, FACS
Dallas, TX

J. David Richardson, MD, FACS
Louisville, KY

Valerie W. Rusch, MD, FACS
New York, NY

Howard M. Snyder III, MD, FACS
Philadelphia, PA

Mark C. Weisser, MD, FACS
Chapel Hill, NC

Thomas V. Whalen, MD, FACS
Allentown, PA

Board of Governors

Chair

Michael J. Zinner, MD, FACS
Boston, MA

Vice-Chair

Lenworth M. Jacobs, Jr., MD, FACS
Hartford, CT

Secretary

James K. Elsey, MD, FACS
Lawrenceville, GA

March 2, 2009

The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Gene Green
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Burgess and Representative Green:

On behalf of the American College of Surgeons (ACS) and the 74,000 members it represents, I am pleased to offer our support for the "Physician Workforce and Graduate Medical Education Enhancement Act of 2009" (H.R. 914). We applaud your leadership on this important issue and are specifically pleased with the inclusion of general surgery in the legislation.

As you know, experts now believe that the United States will face a shortfall in its physician supply over the next twenty years. The number of surgeons trained through the nation's graduate medical education system has not expanded for more than two decades. A growing patient population and a static supply of practicing surgeons are combining with other forces to produced surgical workforce shortages.

As we anticipate the needs and expectations of the future physician workforce, the College recognizes that we must begin to educate and train a larger cadre of surgeons, now.

Currently, a majority of residency training programs exist in or near major metropolitan cities. While the current programs continue to excel at producing high quality surgeons, they do not adequately distribute surgeons to communities across the nation. By providing greater number of general surgery residency training programs in underserved areas, the surgical workforce shortage could be reduced greatly for many states.

Patients need prompt access to definitive care when confronting a surgical emergency. Too often, especially in medically underserved communities, the emergency department of the hospital becomes the single point of universal access for millions of Americans. These patients are waiting longer for emergency treatment and for elective general surgery. Many times, this time lapse can mean the difference between life and death.

We believe your legislation will enhance the nation's ability to meet future surgical workforce needs by providing the appropriate incentives that would lead to the creation of new general surgery training programs in geographic areas that lack an adequate supply of surgeons.

Again, thank you for introducing this important legislation. The ACS and our members stand ready to work with you to secure its enactment into law.

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Russell, MD, FACS
Executive Director

cc: Members of Energy and Commerce Committee