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Editor, Juan Paramo, MD, FACS, Miami, FL

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Greetings from the Chair

As the new Chair of the Committee on Young Surgeons (CYS), I look forward to the opportunity to be a part of a great tradition. During this year's Clinical Congress in New Orleans, I had the opportunity to attend the meeting of the Board of Regents and I had a chance to have lunch with Edward M. Copeland III, MD, FACS, Immediate Past President of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), and who served as CYS President in 1982-83. I came away from that meeting with a better understanding of and appreciation for all the work the ACS does for its members. At the same time, it became clear to me that a large percentage of the Fellowship is unaware of the benefits of ACS membership. To me, this is just a microcosm of what is happening to the CYS and its mission.

The CYS was formed to represent the interests of Fellows of the College who are 45 years of age or younger. This group of surgeons has unique concerns and priorities that are not the same as physicians in training or surgeons who are well established in their practices. Yet many young surgeons who are members of the College do not realize there is an entity within its structure that is specifically looking out for their interests. The CYS annually sponsors and organizes an Initiates Program during the ACS Clinical Congress, which is developed primarily for new members. The annual Washington, DC, Leadership Conference is also part of our efforts to educate young surgeons about health policy and involve them in advocacy activities while honing their leadership skills.

Earlier this year, a survey was sent out to all ACS members ≤ 45 years of age in order to better understand what is important to the young surgeon. The great majority of the

surgeons who responded to the survey stated that ACS membership was important to them. They felt the ACS should play a major role in the dissemination of new/innovative surgical skills, and that it should advocate strongly for professional liability reform, patient safety/quality initiatives, and improvements in physician reimbursement. In addition, many respondents stated they would like to have opportunities to serve on College committees and work groups.

My goal for this coming year is to increase awareness of what the CYS is doing for young surgeons and to create opportunities for those who want to become more involved. These are uncertain times to be a surgeon, and the financial and regulatory pressures can make it difficult to experience the “Joy of Surgery.” I sincerely hope that through this newsletter we can inform, educate, and advocate in a way that will help to “lighten that load” and to make us all remember why we went into this great profession.

If you have a comment or would like more information on how to get involved with the CYS, please email Rhonda Peebles at RPeebles@facs.org.

Best regards,

Perry Shen, MD, FACS, Winston-Salem, NC

Young Surgeons Networking Luncheon Held during the 2007 Leadership Conference

The first networking luncheon for the Chapter Young Surgeon Representatives (YSRs) was held during the ACS Leadership Conference in Washington DC. The goal of the luncheon was to reach out to the YSRs to further our understanding of the concerns that young surgeons throughout the country are facing today. The secondary goal was to get responses to the question: “How can the ACS help?” All of the attendees were enthusiastic participants, and the discussions were open and thought provoking. Many representatives reported that they did not have a young surgeons group at their local ACS chapters. There was an enthusiastic response to the suggestion that presentation tools be developed by the College that could be used at chapter meetings to encourage and develop a role for young surgeons at the chapter level. Many participants felt that the term “young surgeon” was ill-defined, and there was an overall lack of knowledge regarding the role and activities of the CYS. The complete report on our first networking luncheon is available at <http://www.facs.org/memberservices/cys/luncheonreport.html>.

Laurel Soot, MD, FACS, Portland, OR

2007 Initiates Program: A Focus on Current Benefits of ACS Fellowship

I recently had the pleasure of serving as moderator of the 2007 Initiates Program during the American College of Surgeons’ Clinical Congress in New Orleans. Every year this session is sponsored by the Committee on Young Surgeons (CYS). Topics in the past have included surgical innovation, political activities, and the “joy” of a surgical career. The topic for this year’s program was “Current Benefits and Impact of Fellowship in the American College of Surgeons.” Rather than give this year’s Initiates a laundry list of member benefits, we selected College leaders whom we felt would be well positioned to discuss their personal experiences with specific components of the ACS that would be of interest and benefit to

new Fellows, as well as to long-time Fellows.

Andrew L. Warshaw, MD, FACS, gave a convincing presentation on “Advocacy and the American College of Surgeons Political Action Committee.” He shared some interesting data regarding contributions to the ACS-PAC, which he was able to compare with those for other professional organizations. Surprisingly, the trial lawyers are outperforming us by \$1,000 of dollars! The ACS-PAC continues to grow, and it is working extremely hard to make sure our voice is heard on Capitol Hill. In my opinion, advocacy is quite possibly the most important thing the ACS can do for its membership. As surgeons, it is easy for us to be idealistic, but we must remember that we have to work within the established political system. It is vitally important that our interests are represented in Washington, DC, and at our own chapter level. For more information on ACSPA SurgeonsPAC, visit <http://www.facs.org/acspa/index.html>.

Charles D. Mabry, MD, FACS, delivered a concise and very informative discussion on personal financial planning (see <http://www.facs.org/commerce/index.html>), and he reviewed pertinent information regarding the Surgeons Diversified Investment Fund (see <http://www.surgeonsfund.com/>). Finally, Gary L. Timmerman, MD, FACS, who is a former CYS Chair, gave a thoughtful presentation on his personal experiences and benefits of membership in the College. He presented an overview of the numerous benefits available to Fellows and commented on how these resources can be helpful to all members—including surgeons in rural areas. All of the CYS members who were present were happy to have a brief reunion with Dr. Timmerman.

The CYS is actively working on the 2008 Initiates Program, which will be entitled “From the Wards to Wall Street: What Every Surgeon Should Know about Financial Planning and Asset Management.” The session will be moderated by Mark Savarise, MD, FACS, the CYS Vice-Chair. Our 2008 session will provide an overview of relevant financial planning topics such as managing and protecting personal and professional assets, managing investments, and selecting a financial advisor.

Peter Muscarella, II, MD, FACS, Columbus, OH

First CYS Networking Reception Held during the Clinical Congress



For the first time, CYS members held a networking reception with other young surgeons who attended the College's annual Clinical Congress in New Orleans. The reception was held on Monday, October 8, and proved to be very successful because young surgeons were able to share ideas, opinions, and concerns in an informal yet receptive environment. For CYS members, the reception was very productive because it provided us with ideas on how we might represent the interests of young surgeons more effectively and how to provide a united voice to the leadership of the College. We anticipate making this reception a yearly event during the annual Clinical Congress.

Pictured from left to right are: Wayne Frederick, Derrick Beech, Terry Buchmiller, Robert Todd, Danielle Katz, Juan Paramo, Sanjay Parikh, Peter Muscarella, and Perry Shen.

Juan C. Paramo, MD, FACS, Miami, FL

Update on e-FACS.org, the ACS Web Portal

The College's Web Portal continues to develop and already is offering a wide variety of services and educational content to its members. In the "Young Surgeons Community" (http://efacs.org/portal/page/portal/ACS_Content/ACSCOMMUNITIESSPECIALITIES/YoungCmtty) there are easy links to:

- practice management information
- articles and reports by young surgeons in ACS publications, such as "College responds to young surgeons asking 'What's in it for me?'" in the *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons*
- the National Trauma Data Bank and the Commission on Cancer
- the Committee on Young Surgeons, as well as many, many more sites

At the CYS page there is information about the committee, the College's Operation Giving Back program, and conferences and resources of interest to young surgeons. Through the Web portal, you also can log cases (which will be important in maintenance of certification:

http://efacs.org/portal/page/portal/ACS_Content/MYPAGE/MYCASES), access the job bank (http://www.healthcareers.com/site_templates/ACS/index.asp?aff=ACS&SPLD=ACS), and search for colleagues (http://efacs.org/portal/page/portal/ACS_Content/ACSSvcs/MEMBERTOOLS/Disclaimer). We are continually updating the Young Surgeons areas of the portal, and we welcome your input, comments, and suggestions on how to make the Web portal experience even better for you. Please send comments and suggestions to Rhonda Peebles at RPeebles@facs.org.

Danielle A. Katz, MD, FACS, Syracuse, NY

Practice Tip from Economedix (economedix.com): Credentialing the New Physician

In the world of managed care, one of the first steps in establishing a good practice is participating in quality third-party payer programs. There are several steps in this process and they can be quite time-consuming. So getting an early start is always a good idea.

In order to participate with most payers, you will be required to submit two documents: a contract and your credentialing application. In some cases, the original request for a contract also includes the credentialing information. If the new surgeon is in an established group, the contract probably already exists so the only thing needed is the credentialing application.

In the case of Medicare, an application must be completed. The application is the CMS 855 form and it comes in several types. There is an application for assignment of benefits to the group, there is the individual physician application, and then there is the group application. In most cases, the physician only needs to fill out the 855-I form. This process can take anywhere from three to six months depending on the Medicare carrier and its backlog. The form requires many attachments, such as photocopies of state licenses, fictitious names, DEA certificate, training certifications, and more. The best advice is to start the application as soon as you know where you will be practicing even if you have not started yet. Even if you have not yet been approved by Medicare, you can see Medicare patients but you cannot bill for them until you get the final approval letter.

For private payers, just go to the Web site of the payer to request a contract. While they are fairly standard, they are legal agreements and need to be reviewed carefully. Many state medical associations have reviewed contracts from larger payers and can provide good advice as to what the contracts require and what they will do. One of the most important parts is the fee schedule they offer. They may provide it with the contract or they may only reference it in the contract. In either case, it is important to know in advance what the reimbursement will be. At that point a decision can be made whether or not to sign the contract.

The second step in the process is the credentialing. The purpose is to determine the qualifications of the applicant. Most payers will have either a credentialing form, or they will accept a universal form such as CAQH. The most common universal form is completed online at <http://www.caqh.org/> . The applicant then only needs to provide the user ID to the payer to access the credential. If the payer does not participate in CAQH, the payer's form will need to be completed along with all the copies of required documents. Again, this is a time-consuming process and needs to be started as early as possible. In the case of private payers, they will not pay claims to you as a participant until the credentialing process is completed, unlike the Medicare program, which will pay from the requested start date even

if it precedes the approval date.

Remember, though, not every plan is a good one, and the terms need to be closely reviewed before signing up. When starting out, participation with the same plans that your referring physicians are using can be a faster track to building a viable practice.

Tom Loughrey, MBA, CCS-P
Economedix

CYS e-News is brought to you by the Portal Work Group of the American College of Surgeons Committee on Young Surgeons (ACS-CYS)

CYS Portal Work Group

Terry Buchmiller, MD, FACS (Chair)
Danielle Katz, MD, FACS
Juan C. Paramo, MD, FACS
Sanjay Parikh, MD, FACS

The American College of Surgeons Committee on Young Surgeons (ACS-CYS)

To view the current CYS roster, go to <http://www.facs.org/memberservices/cys/index.html>

About the ACS-CYS:

Mission: The CYS represents the interests and concerns of the young surgeons of the College. The CYS promotes active participation and input from young surgeons to support College activities.

Vision: The CYS exists to mentor those younger, advise those older, and advocate for our peers within the College. The CYS will act as consultants to the College regarding the needs specific to the young surgeon.

Goals:

- I. Education: Provide opportunities for young surgeons to learn those aspects of surgical practice specific to us, and to promote educational opportunities for our peers and future surgeons.
- II. Research and Optimal Patient Care: Provide opportunities to explore the dynamic practice of surgery focused on the needs of young surgeons and patients.
- III. Advocacy and Health Policy: Represent the interests of young surgeons and their patients. Educate the College and the public about the concerns specific to all surgeons.
- IV. Member Services: Develop methods of providing services needed by the young

surgeon and endeavor to include all young surgeons under the umbrella of the College.

For additional information log on to

<http://www.facs.org/memberservices/cys/index.html> or contact us at youngsurgeons@facs.org.

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