

February 2007

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[From the Chair: The College, Quality Initiatives, Surgical Training, and the Future of Surgery](#)

To me, the “College” in American College of Surgeons (ACS) doesn’t only mean a “body of persons having a common purpose or shared duties.” Rather, it also means “an institution of higher learning.” We’ve all learned from the ACS – whether it be at the Clinical Congress or through the Web Portal, the *Journal of the American College of Surgeons*, or even this e-Newsletter. What excites me in particular is when members of RAS are able to teach others about an issue of great importance to young surgeons.

One way in which we do this is through the **Annual RAS Symposium at the Clinical Congress**. This year’s symposium will be entitled “**Pay for performance and surgical quality initiatives: Will the ‘generalist’ and surgical training survive in the new paradigm?**” Led by Issues Committee Co-Chairs Hari Nathan, MD, and Mindy Williams, MD, the symposium will examine surgical quality initiatives and their potential effect on both resident training and the practice of surgery in the future. Faced with outcomes assessment (potentially tied to reimbursement), will young surgeons feel prepared for practice without fellowship training? Will the “generalist” surgeon still exist, or will we all find our own specific niche? With the evidence that outcomes for some procedures are improved with increased surgeon or hospital volume, can residents at smaller hospitals receive adequate training across the breadth of their surgical specialty? How will quality initiatives affect the surgical experience of residents?

The symposium will be held on **Sunday, October 7**, from 1-4 pm. We hope to see you there.

Gregory S. Cherr, MD
Chair, RAS-ACS
Buffalo, NY

[EBRS: L'Association Canadienne des Chirurgiens Généraux and the ACS](#)

Analyzing current literature is essential to the delivery of quality surgical care. Recognizing this

important educational need, the College has partnered with the Canadian Association of General Surgeons to offer Evidence-Based Reviews in Surgery (EBRS). A topical online **monthly curriculum** is provided that includes several articles, a listserv-based discussion, and a post-test for **CME credit**. **Additional articles and electronic journals are also available on the EBRS website**. The February topic is PET/CT in the Management of Pancreatic Cancer.

Many residency training programs and departments of surgery are advocating EBRS for purposes of resident education and CME. If you or your department is interested, contact mmckenzie@mtsinai.on.ca.

C. Suzanne Cutter, MD
Chair, RAS-ACS Communications Committee
New York, NY

ACS Offers Fellowship in Surgical Outcomes

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) is offering a **two-year fellowship at its Chicago headquarters to fill the gap in surgical education and research**. The College has long been at the forefront of quality assurance and to that end houses a number of robust data sources ripe for surgical outcomes research. Fellows in the *ACS Clinical Scholars Program* will undertake epidemiological and outcomes research. Upon completion, Fellows will obtain a **Master's Degree in Clinical Investigation through the Northwestern University School of Medicine and Public Health**. Access to computing resources and PhD level statisticians will be made available. The curriculum will be supplemented by attendance at three ACS skills courses designed for young surgeons in pursuit of academic careers — the Outcomes Research Course, Young Surgical Investigators Course, and Clinical Trials Course.

The deadline for the 2008-2010 Fellowship year is July 15, 2007. The program is open to all surgical residents who would have completed at least two years of surgical training by the start of their fellowship. Recent graduates are also encouraged to apply. Fellows may also be eligible for NIH loan reimbursement (separate application required upon acceptance as an ACS Clinical Scholar). Further information is available on the ACS Web site at <http://www.facs.org/ropc/clinicalscholars2008.html>.

Heena P. Santry, MD
Member, RAS-ACS Communications Committee
Chicago, IL

Resolutions Passed at Interim Meeting of the AMA Focus on Resident Issues

The interim meeting of the American Medical Association was held in Las Vegas, NV, in mid-November, and issues of interest to surgical residents were debated during the meeting. After much deliberation, six resolutions of particular interest to residents were passed by the House of Delegates. Here are the details:

- **Resolution 1: Independent Regulation of Physician Licensing Exams.** The Resident and Fellow Section (RFS) of the AMA is acting preemptively to oppose implementation of an examination analogous to the Clinical Skills Exam that medical students currently take. At the moment, there is no such requirement; there are rumblings that one might be required in the not-too distant future. This resolution calls for the AMA to advocate for independent oversight of this process.
- **Resolution 2: Improving Resident, Fellow, and Patient Safety.** This resolution calls on the AMA to urge the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) to create an anonymous system for reporting work hour violations and resident intimidation. It also seeks to create a system of incentives and disincentives for programs to comply with the requirements.
- **Resolution 4: Resident Pay during Orientation.** This resolution asks the AMA to advocate for resident and fellow pay and benefits during orientation period.

- **Resolution 6: Opposition to Funding Cuts for Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Programs.** This resolution calls on the AMA to oppose a cut (\$33 million to \$0) in the funding of an organization that is designed to increase the number of individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds in the health professions.
- **Resolution 7: Management of House Staff as Critical Care Patients in Teaching Hospitals.** This resolution asks the AMA to study the ethical and psychological implications of treating co-workers and loved ones when they are admitted as patients.
- **Resolution 8: Promoting Prevention Strategies in Waiting Rooms.** This resolution calls on the AMA to promote the use of video-based broadcasts of prevention messages in every doctor's waiting room, in lieu of any other form of entertainment.

These resolutions represent ideas from individual residents across the country. If you have an issue that you think merits incorporation into AMA policy, please feel free to contact me at moalemja@umdnj.edu.

Jacob Moalem, MD
Secretary, RAS-ACS
North Brunswick, NJ

Operation Giving Back and the Volunteerism Community

We invite you to visit the Volunteerism Community on the ACS Web Portal (<http://www.efacs.org>) to both explore topics on surgical volunteerism and to lend your voice to topics of interest. Many of the features found on the Operation Giving Back Web site (<http://www.operationgivingback.facs.org>) are available via the portal community as well, including pertinent articles related to volunteer experiences, perspectives, and vision. Consider using the discussion forums to share pearls of wisdom you've learned from your own volunteer experiences – or start discussions on topics that interest you. Log on to the ACS Web Portal, click "Communities and Specialties," and then click on "Volunteerism."

It is also time to submit nominations for the **ACS Surgical Volunteerism Award**, which is presented annually at the Clinical Congress in October. Surgeons of all specialties and at all stages of their careers are encouraged to apply. Their contributions to those in need in our own country or others can be of a clinical or educational nature. For a full description of the guidelines for nomination and to download an application, visit the "Announcements" section of the OGB homepage at (<http://www.operationgivingback.facs.org>). Nominations must be postmarked by February 28, 2007. For more information, contact Meghan Benson at mbenson@facs.org or (312) 202-5458.

And if you're thinking about volunteering, there is currently an **urgent need for volunteers** for Cali in Colombia, Mwanza in Tanzania, and New Orleans! You can also search through the database to see which organizations offer opportunities for residents' right from the homepage. For more details, visit the OGB Web site.

Mecker Möller, MD
Associate Community Editor, Volunteerism Community Web Portal
Co-Chair, RAS-ACS Communications Committee
Tampa, FL

Five-Minute Legislative Consult Can Achieve Big Results

Can you spare five minutes a week to be involved? In just five minutes a week, you can have an effect on medicine as a whole. Everyone has at least five legislators: two US Senators, US Representative, state senator, and state representative. How can you make a difference? **A five-minute call a week to one of these legislators** gives you over 10 contacts per year to each office. Your first impression of this idea is probably "a five-minute call won't do anything." Now let's do the math. With a membership of over 11,000, if 5 percent commit to making one call per week, that is 550 contacts per week – over 28,000 contacts per year to our legislative offices.

Every Congressman keeps track of each constituent contact--both with regard to the frequency and topic. Your direct contact is **critically important in determining to determine what issues legislators consider important** because YOU ARE THE VOTER. A second and possibly more powerful benefit is **developing relationships** – not necessarily with the legislators themselves, but with the staff people they trust to advise them on critical issues.

If you follow your contact schedule, you may become the individual whom the office will contact when a sensitive issue arises. That's right, they may ask for your advice! E-mail is a valuable tool but cannot replace the personal interactions of a phone call.

Ross F. Goldberg, MD

Chair, Resident and Fellow Section, Massachusetts Medical Society
Member, RAS-ACS Issues Committee
Boston, MA

Nominations Sought for the Third Annual Jacobson Promising Investigator Award

The American College of Surgeons (ACS) is accepting nominations for the **Third Joan L. and Julius H. Jacobson II Promising Investigator Award**, which will be awarded this year. This award has been established to recognize outstanding surgeons engaged in research advancing the art and science of surgery. **The award amount is \$30,000, to be given at least once every two years.** The College's Surgical Research Committee administers the award. The award criteria are:

1. Candidate must be board certified in a surgical specialty and **must have completed surgical training in the last three to six years.**
2. Candidate must be a **Fellow or an Associate Fellow** of the ACS.
3. Candidate must hold a faculty appointment at a research-based academic medical center (military service position included).
4. Candidate must have received peer-reviewed funding, such as a K-Series Award from the NIH, VA, NSF, or DOD merit review to support their research effort.
5. Nomination documentation must include a letter of recommendation from the nominee's department chair. Up to three additional letters of recommendation will be accepted.
6. **Only one application per surgical department will be accepted.**
7. Nomination documentation must include an NIH formatted bio-sketch and copies of the candidate's three most significant publications.
8. Nominee must submit a one-page essay to the committee explaining why he or she should be considered for the award, and discussing the importance of the research he or she has conducted/is conducting.

The recipient may be required to prepare and give a presentation on his or her research at the annual ACS Clinical Congress following receipt of the award. Nominations are accepted at any time but to be considered for 2007, **submissions must be e-mailed or postmarked no later than March 16, 2007.** Compile the necessary documentation listed above and submit it electronically to Mary T. Fitzgerald at mfitzgerald@facs.org. Nominations can also be submitted on a CD-ROM mailed to: Mary T. Fitzgerald, American College of Surgeons, 633 N. Saint Clair St., Chicago, IL 60611-3211. For additional information, e-mail us or call (312) 202-5319.

Mary T. Fitzgerald

Continuous Quality Improvement, American College of Surgeons
Chicago, IL

Thanks from the RAS-ACS Leadership Scholarship Recipient

I would like to thank the Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS) for having selected me for this prestigious **Leadership Scholarship**. I attended the Outcomes Research Course held in Chicago on November 17-19, 2006.

The Outcomes Research Course allowed me to enhance my knowledge in the development of

clinical outcomes studies and improved my ability to statistically analyze data and interpret results. **This course has expanded my previous experiences in clinical research.** It emphasized the importance of examining the analytical, and methodological decisions and processes in evaluating the effectiveness and safety of programs and interventions designed to enhance health outcomes in the care of patients.

Residency training establishes a foundation in education, leadership, communication, and research. Our practice of evidence-based medicine is evolving with the current changes in medicine. The public and insurance companies demand more safety processes in our health care system in order to reduce complications. It is my belief that the RAS-ACS Scholarship enhances and builds upon this foundation. **The scholarship has given me the tools necessary to succeed as a leader in surgery.**

P. Marco Fisichella, MD

Recipient, RAS-ACS Leadership Scholarship
Chicago, IL

I Need Your Help!

I've just returned from the Board of Regents meeting in Chicago. The leaders of the College spent a significant amount of time on strategic planning regarding the future of the ACS. The Regents want to make the College attractive to young surgeons (like you). Terry Buchmiller, MD, FACS, chair of the Committee on Young Surgeons, and I were asked to speak for all young surgeons. Although I can guess what will make the College attractive to you seven to 10 years from now, it would be better if you could tell me what is important to you. **In the near future, you will be asked to complete an online survey to assess your thoughts about the future of the College.**

Here's how you can help-

- Complete the survey! It will be quick, Internet-based, anonymous, and incredibly important.
- Tell me what you think. Send me an e-mail, via staff liaison Peg Haar (phaar@facs.org) with your thoughts about ACS programs--what works, what needs to be improved, what is missing, or what your vision is for the future of the College.

Your input will be important to the Regents in planning the future of the ACS. Please help!

Gregory Cherr, MD

Chair, RAS-ACS
Buffalo, NY

Surgical Spring Week 2007: SAGES/ACS Joint Symposia and Popular Resident Programs

You are invited to attend the 35th Annual Spring Meeting of the American College of Surgeons, to be held **April 22-25, 2007**, in Las Vegas, NV, at the Paris Las Vegas Hotel. This year, the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) will kick off Surgical Spring Week, which will be its annual conference followed by the ACS Spring Meeting. Joint symposia will be held between the two meetings on **Sunday, April 22, 2007**.

ACS/SAGES 2007 Joint Symposia

“Esophageal and Gastric Disease”

“Establishing a Skills Training Program: What You Need to Know”

Resident Programs on Monday, April 23, 2007

The very popular (and entertaining) resident programs will be held on **Monday, April 23, 2007**. An overview of each program follows.

Clinical Abstract Presentations by Residents

Listen to presentations by the future Folkmans, Starzls, and Fogarties. Investigators in-training will present summaries of hypothesis-testing research.

Spectacular Cases by Residents

Based on actual cases, surgery residents weave a tale that takes the panel of experts and the audience on an amazing, interesting journey of patient care. The panel asks and answers questions about the cases in a clinicopathologic conference style.

Surgical Jeopardy

Join us for this very popular game show style event in which teams of surgical residents test their surgical knowledge. Alex Trebek is otherwise engaged, but Dr. Mark Bowyer has graciously agreed to once again command the podium.

For complete information on program schedule, registration, and hotel go to <http://www.facs.org/springmeeting2007/index.html>

About RAS-ACS

The Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS) is an organization within the American College of Surgeons that was formed to benefit young and future surgeons through involvement in the College's activities. Membership in the RAS-ACS is automatic when you become a Resident Member or an Associate Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. Resident membership is open to all surgical residents enrolled in an accredited graduate educational program, surgical research, or fellowship program. Associate Fellow membership is open to young surgeons who are currently engaged in a second surgical residency, a research or a fellowship program, a surgical specialty practice, and are within five years of graduation from formal surgical residency training. Currently, over 2,600 Associate Fellows and 8,000 Residents are part of the RAS-ACS.

Benefits of becoming a RAS-ACS member:

- free *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* subscription
- free *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons* subscription
- free online *ACS Surgery Textbook*
- free Clinical Congress and Spring Meeting registration and access to CME credit
- reduced pricing for selected postgraduate courses at the Clinical Congress
- information on clinical and research fellowship opportunities
- free access to the College's job and resume databank
- electronic newsletter, Web site, and Web portal
- educational materials to meet requirements for board certification
- opportunities to serve on various College committees
- opportunities for local chapter affiliation
- access to ACS-sponsored insurance programs (life, health, disability)
- a voice in advocacy and policy-making issues concerning residents and young surgeons

Join today!

Be Sure to Visit These Important Areas of the ACS Web site:

RAS-ACS Homepage: <http://www.facs.org/ras-acs/index.html>

How to Join RAS-ACS: <http://www.facs.org/ras-acs/membership/membership.html>

Job Bank: http://www.healthcareers.com/site_templates/ACS/index.asp?aff=ACS&SPLD=ACS

ACS Homepage: <http://www.facs.org>

ACS Spring Meeting: <http://www.facs.org/springmeeting2006/index.html>

Your Feedback Is Important to Us

We are interested in making sure that the content of *RAS-ACS News* meets the interests and responds to the needs of surgical residents and newly practicing surgeons across the country. Your feedback and ideas are important to us. Please send your comments about this newsletter and your ideas for articles to the Editor at ras-news@facs.org.

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For additional information regarding the benefits and activities of the RAS-ACS, please contact Joan Wellington.

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