

RAS-ACS News



A Quarterly Update from the Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons



August 2006

Editor: C. Suzanne Cutter, MD, Chair, Communications Committee, RAS-ACS

Associate Editors: Carlos M. Mery, MD, MPH, and Mecker G. Möller, MD

- [RAS-ACS Issues Call for Nominations](#)
- [Interns: You're Invited to Become A Member of RAS-ACS](#)
- [What Do You Do Outside the "Call Room?"](#)
- [RAS-ACS Membership Committee Activities Update](#)
- [Committee on Young Surgeons Report](#)
- [Current Initiatives of the ACS Committee on Trauma](#)
- [Update on the Resident and Fellow Section of the American Medical Association](#)
- [Keeping Track of Your CME Credits: Come Meet Efacts.org!](#)
- [Learning about Outcomes Research: The Second Outcomes Research Course](#)
- [ACS Releases Comprehensive Report on Emergency Care Crisis](#)
- [IMGs in American Surgery](#)
- [92nd Annual Clinical Congress Provides Prime Opportunities for Career Advancement](#)
- [And While You're in Chicago, Your Kids Can Attend Camp ACS](#)
- [2006 Clinical Congress Planning Guide for RAS](#)

RAS-ACS Issues Call for Nominations

The executive committee and Officers of the Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS) are asking for **nominations for the position of Secretary**. This position succeeds itself to become Vice-Chair and Chair over a three-year term. Nominees should have been a Resident Member or an Associate Fellow member of the College for at least three years. Ideally, nominees are in their last year of training and have been active in the activities of RAS-ACS. Nominees should submit a statement of intent along with a letter of support from their Program Director (for residents) or Department Chair (for Associate Fellows) to Peg Haar at phaar@facs.org. They should be prepared to attend the ACS Clinical Congress in Chicago where presentation of candidates and elections will be held during the **Council of Representatives Meeting**, which

will be held from 8 am to 12 noon on Sunday, October 8. The meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency McCormick Place in Regency Ballroom C.

During the Council of Representatives meeting, which is the annual business meeting, other key positions within RAS-ACS will be determined as well. These positions include appointments to the **ACS Advisory Councils for the Surgical Specialties, the RAS-ACS Executive Committee, RAS-ACS working committees, and appointments to other committees of the College.** Individuals who are interested in becoming more involved or learning more about RAS-ACS should plan to attend.

If your colleagues are not Resident or Associate Fellow members, contact Peg Haar (phaar@facs.org) for application materials or go online to <http://www.facs.org/memberservices/documents.html>. RAS members receive **FREE** registration for the Clinical Congress. We look forward to seeing you in Chicago!

Michael Sutherland, MD

Chair, RAS-ACS
Vacaville, CA

Interns: You're Invited to Become A Member of RAS-ACS

The Membership Committee of RAS-ACS welcomes all new interns. Take this year to explore what the American College of Surgeons has to offer by visiting its Web site <http://www.facs.org>. You can also sign up for a complimentary 30-day trial membership in the American College of Surgeons that will provide you with access to the ACS Web Portal—[e-FACS.org](http://www.efacs.org)—and with a variety of features typically available to ACS members. By accessing the Web portal at <http://www.efacs.org>, all surgeons, as well as other members of the surgical team, will be able to sample some of the College's membership benefits, including:

- **Communities and Specialties:** Online communities with tailored resources for your surgical specialty or other practice interests.
- **Member Services:** One copy each of both the Journal of the American College of Surgeons and the ACS Bulletin (monthly College news magazine), which will be mailed to your home or office.
- **Surgical Education:** Online courses and clinical updates, some of which are eligible for Category 1 CME credits (eLearning Center), and complimentary access for two eLearning Webcasts during your 30-day trial term.
- **Quality and Safety:** Information and access to the Division of Research and Optimal Patient Care, which includes information in the key College program areas of Cancer, Trauma, and Continuous Quality Improvement, as well as the ACS-Bariatric Surgery Center Network (BSCN) Accreditation Program, and

- the National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (NSQIP).
- **Advocacy and Health Policy:** Access to various legislative and health policy resources put together by a team of professionals dedicated to advocacy on behalf of surgeons and their patients, including the latest in health policy news, medical liability reform, and patient safety issues, as well as a variety of practice management tools.

Also, talk to your fellow residents and attendings about the College and about RAS-ACS. Your program may also have a **liaison to RAS** who can help point you in the right direction. If there is no liaison at your program and you are interested in becoming more involved, please contact Peg Haar (phaar@facs.org). The annual membership to RAS-ACS is complimentary during your intern year and costs \$20 for each subsequent year, a fee that can now be paid in advance for the duration of your residency.

Andrea Silver, MD
Co-Chair, RAS-ACS Membership Committee
Royal Oak, MI

What Do You Do Outside the “Call Room?”

This year, the RAS hopes to launch a new, **recurring column in the ACS Bulletin** entitled “The Call Room” that will be all about **you and your life**. Just like the call room in the hospital can be a refuge from the challenges of clinical responsibilities, we envision this column as a forum where the aspects of your life that provide a refuge from your career can be discussed.

We want to hear about your **challenges and accomplishments outside of surgery** so that we can include your stories in the column. Does anything come to mind when you hear the following topics: “Transition from Residency to Fellowship,” “Military Reservist,” “Athletics and Extreme Sports,” “Visual and Performing Arts,” “Career Before Surgery,” and “Single Parenting”? If you have an experience to share or anecdote to tell on any of these topics, please contact Peg Haar, phaar@facs.org, and we will handle the rest. We hope to hear from you so we can share your remarkable stories with the rest of the College’s membership in an upcoming issue of the *Bulletin*.

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

Joshua Rosenow, MD
Member, RAS-ACS Communications Committee
Chicago, IL

C. Suzanne Cutter, MD

Chair, RAS-ACS Communications Committee
New York, NY

RAS-ACS Membership Committee Activities Update

This past year has been a very fruitful one for the membership committee. In a fairly short period of time, **we have recruited more than 80 liaisons to the Resident and Associate Society (RAS) from various training programs across the country and outside the US**, all of whom are currently encouraging resident and medical student membership in the ACS at their home institutions. In addition, they are gathering important data regarding current membership profiles of the general surgery and surgical specialty residencies, informing new residents about the ACS, and communicating information regarding RAS-ACS conferences and initiatives to other residents.

Another area of focus has been the **recruitment of medical student members**. To that end, an informational pamphlet has been distributed to all medical schools. In addition, resolutions are being put forth to the American Medical Association's House of Delegates (HOD) that would allow us to receive names and addresses of Match participants and USMLE examinees who are in pursuit of a surgical career.

If you are interested in hearing more about the Membership Committee and its activities, or if you want to join us in our activities, please contact Peg Haar, phaar@facs.org, or join us at the Clinical Congress prior to the RAS symposium on Acute Care Surgery.

Jacob Moalem, MD

Co-Chair, RAS-ACS Membership Committee
New Brunswick, NJ

Andrea Silver, MD

Co-Chair, RAS-ACS Membership Committee
Royal Oak, MI

Committee on Young Surgeons Report

The Committee on Young Surgeons (CYS) of the ACS has been actively involved in trying to increase the participation of young surgeons in the College. The CYS has met on several occasions, including at the recent Leadership Conference in Washington, DC. There are several activities the CYS is involved in that are of particular interest to members of RAS. First, **Child Care has again been arranged for the children of attendees at this year's Clinical Congress**. Everyone is strongly encouraged to take advantage of this service. Additionally, CYS is planning to cosponsor with RAS a **General Session during the 2007 ACS Clinical Congress**. The CYS is also exploring ways to become more active within the College and

better represent all young surgeons. This goal may include facilitating continued involvement in the College as people transition from being RAS members to becoming Fellows.

Danielle A. Katz, MD
CYS Liaison to RAS-ACS
Syracuse, NY

Current Initiatives of the ACS Committee on Trauma

In a continued effort to remain current on key activities of the College, the RAS has established representation within the ACS Committee on Trauma (COT). This committee is responsible for many developing and implementing programs and policies regarding the provision of trauma care at the national level. Current activities and accomplishments include:

- By working with the College's staff in Washington, DC, undertaking attempts to achieve reappropriation of funds from the **federal budget** for trauma care systems in the US; funding was **decreased in 2006** with no plans for restoration in 2007.
- Sponsoring **2006 Clinical Congress** programs: trauma-related postgraduate courses, general sessions, a trauma surgery video session, and a competition.
- Addressing the **relationship between alcohol and injury** through alcohol screening initiatives, instituting brief interventions that reduce the injury occurrence and recidivism of the alcoholic patient population, and working to institute legislation that protects institutions from the financial implications of alcohol screening.
- Published annual report from the **National Trauma Databank (NTDB) 2006**, which is soon to be available. The new version provides data from over 500 trauma centers and includes more than 1.8 million patient records. Refinements in data quality assurance have made this report an outstanding resource for evaluation of an enormous dataset of trauma patients.
- **The Advanced Trauma Life Support (ATLS)** course is celebrating its 25th anniversary and now reaches 27 countries worldwide. A recent advance has been the development of Web-based course registration and reporting, which is estimated to be launched in November 2006. The US military has requested the assistance of ATLS instructors to provide ATLS courses to military officers in San Antonio, TX. Potential volunteers can contact the Defense Medical Readiness Training Institute at (210) 221-2954.

R. Shayn Martin, MD
RAS-ACS Representative to ACS-COT
Winston-Salem, NC

Update on the Resident and Fellow Section of the American Medical Association

During the June 2006 meeting of the **AMA-RFS (Resident and Fellow Section of the American Medical Association)** meeting, the **Resident and Associate Society of the American College of Surgeons (RAS-ACS), in an effort to boost membership, sponsored two resolutions to be submitted to the AMA.** If passed, the AMA would urge the National Resident Matching Program (NRMP) and the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) to release contact information of consenting participants in the Match and USMLE examinations to state and medical subspecialty societies. While these resolutions received great support, each could be further strengthened by incorporating other groups (such as DOs) into a more comprehensive resolution. This idea will be discussed in November, and it is hoped it will be accepted into AMA policy. Other accepted resolutions included:

- Illinois delegation: asks the AMA to study resident burnout-- ways to recognize it, treat it, and possibly prevent it.
- Missouri delegation: calls on the AMA to support the elimination of waiting periods imposed by employers on new residents and fellows.
- AMA members: call on the AMA to study gender disparities with regard to physician salaries.
- AMA members: call for the compilation and maintenance of a comprehensive list of all loan repayment programs across the country.

The AMA-RFS is an excellent avenue through which significant national policy changes can be made. If there are any issues you would like raised in this forum, please e-mail me at moalemja@umdnj.edu. I will be delighted to help write resolutions and speak on your behalf.

Jacob Moalem, MD

RAS-ACS Delegate to the AMA-RFS
New Brunswick, NJ

Keeping Track of Your CME Credits: Come Meet Efacts.org!

As we all know, every surgeon is **required to accrue continuing medical education (CME) credits each year.** The exact number of credits is decided by your state medical board. The usual requirements are:

- 100 CME credits in a 24-month period
- predetermined amount being category I credits and the remaining being category II credits

An accredited sponsor determines if an activity gives you category I or category II credits. As residents or fellows in ACGME-approved programs, we are usually granted 50 category I CME credits for each year of full-time or part-time participation. Completion of a medically related degree such as a Masters in Public Health usually earns 25 category I CME credits. Publishing a peer-reviewed manuscript could mean up to 10 category I credits, and giving a poster presentation with a published abstract could give you up to 5 category I credits.

Keeping track of your CME credits each year is your professional responsibility. This task has now been made easier for members of the College with a new tool that is available through the College's Web Portal—e-FACS.org.

The “My CME” page on the ACS Web Portal is your own administrative assistant that will help you record your CME credits. Access the members-only Web Portal at <http://www.efacs.org>. Type in your user name and password. Your user name is your 8-digit College ID number. Find it on the address label of your *Bulletin* or your ACS dues bill, or e-mail phaar@facs.org to obtain it. Your password is your last name unless you have changed it.

Once you have logged onto the portal, look for the “**ACS CME**” link at the top of the right-hand column on the homepage. Then click on the **MY CME** link, which is the second link on the list you'll find in the left-hand column of the page. Click on **List/Add** and select **Add CME**. Each entry can be edited.

Consult your state medical board's Web site for details on CME credit values for publications, presentations, teaching, and journal review. Congratulations, you did it! Now check out the other cool features on the ACS Web Portal.

Mallory Williams, MD

Member, RAS-ACS Communications Committee
Boston, MA

Wesley Francis, MD

Detroit, MI

Learning about Outcomes Research: The Second Outcomes Research Course

The ACS Surgical Research Committee is sponsoring the second biennial Outcomes Research Course on **November 17-19, 2006, at ACS Headquarters** in Chicago. The course emphasizes the **core concepts of outcomes research and its practical applications** to important questions facing surgeons and surgical practice. Intended primarily for surgeon researchers, its flexible curriculum and interactive format are designed to meet the interests of **investigators**

with varying skills and experiences. Novices will learn the key concepts of outcomes research, including how to work with and interpret data. Experienced researchers will get direct feedback on their work and practical advice from leaders in the field.

Day 1: provides a broad overview of the field, primarily in lecture format.

Day 2: choice of Skills Labs according to background and primary research interests; during breakout sessions, participants receive feedback on their ongoing work or study proposals from experts in the field.

Day 3: selected course faculty presents “Research in Progress” in interactive sessions, allowing participants to “get under the hood” of the work of established investigators.

Topics include **clinical epidemiology, statistical analysis, external funding strategies, and career development.** Participation is limited, and priority will be given to ACS members. Register by September 1, 2006, to obtain the early registration discount. Visit <http://www.facs.org/cqi/src/outcomesres.html> for additional information about the course, schedule, fees, and registration form. Contact Mary Fitzgerald at (312) 202-5319 or by e-mail at mfitzgerald@facs.org with questions.

Peg Haar

Administrator, ACS Division of Member Services
Chicago, IL

ACS Releases Comprehensive Report on Emergency Care Crisis

On June 23, the American College of Surgeons (ACS) released *A Growing Crisis in Patient Access to Emergency Surgical Care*, a comprehensive report that outlines in depth the serious problems surgeons and their patients are facing due to the virtual collapse of the nation’s emergency care system. Health system changes, declining availability of specialists to take emergency call, increased medical liability exposure, and limited reimbursement have stressed surgical practice to the point that a **looming shortage of surgeons is likely to occur. This shortage may jeopardize patients’ access to surgical care when they are in the most dire and extreme of circumstances.** Further, the ACS believes that this nation’s commitment to disaster preparedness and response in the post 9-11/Hurricane Katrina era must include patient access to prompt acute care services in our nation’s emergency departments.

In its report, the College calls on Congress to reauthorize the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA) Trauma-EMS Program

by passing S. 265 and H.R. 5555 and amend scholarship and loan repayment programs designed to recruit physicians to provide care in underserved areas to also help encourage surgeons to practice in these settings. It also asks Congress to address the liability issues that discourage specialists from taking emergency call, and reviews a variety of mechanisms (tax credits or deductions) to improve the reimbursement issues for uncompensated, EMTALA-related care. The ACS report is available online at <http://www.facs.org/ahp/emergcarecrisis.pdf>.

Jon H. Sutton, MBA
Manager, State Affairs
ACS Division of Advocacy & Health Policy
Chicago, IL

IMGs in American Surgery

In recent years, general surgery has progressively become more attractive to graduating medical students. This fact is highlighted by the National Resident Matching Program's (NRMP's) most recent match statistics, showing only one unfilled position in general surgery in 2006, compared with 58 unfilled positions in 2002. Undoubtedly, an important factor leading to the increased applications is the national implementation of the 80-hour work week. The resulting increased competitiveness, however, has not affected the recruitment of non-US medical graduates, who consistently have comprised 15-20 percent of the positions offered from 2002-2006. One hundred seventy-four of 1,046 general surgery residents who began training in 2006 are non-US medical graduates. **International Medical Graduates (IMG) currently constitute 15 percent (8,399 of 55,142) of the Fellows of the American College of Surgeons practicing in the United States.**

These are impressive statistics, given the perception of what some people see as the 'inferior training' of the international medical graduate. This negative connotation persists even with the knowledge that the anatomy, physiology, and biochemical reactions of the human body know no geographic boundaries. The IMG's challenge to overcome this perception requires not only mastering the basic sciences, but also developing a personal, social, and professional maturity great enough to challenge US graduates for US training positions. Perseverance and dedication (often while separated from family and friends) are required to succeed in this environment.

Should the future of a graduating medical student be based on hard-earned USMLE scores and personal attributes, or rather on the location of his/her medical school? Does international medical school training detract from a US-trained surgical resident's qualifications for a surgical fellowship? Should it, considering we are all US-trained surgical residents? We are hopeful that general surgery will continue to become increasingly competitive and will always accept into its privileged ranks the **most qualified graduate, regardless of the**

location where those qualifications were so diligently acquired.

Dean R. Cerio, MD

Member, RAS-ACS Education Committee
Buffalo, NY

Cyrus F. Loghmanee, MD

Member, RAS-ACS Issues Committee
Buffalo, NY

92nd Annual Clinical Congress Provides Prime Opportunities for Career Advancement

Utilizing the upcoming Clinical Congress to advance your career is as easy as:

1. Log on to ACS Career Opportunities (http://www.healthcareers.com/site_templates/ACS/index.asp?aff=ACS&SPLD=ACS) where candidates can create, upload and post resumes, search through local and national surgical opportunities, and sign up to receive Job Alerts.
2. Use Conference Connection™ to indicate your attendance at the meeting and provide your local contact information so that interested employers can contact you to set up interviews on site.
3. Come to the Congress prepared to find the perfect match! ACS Career Opportunities will be on site, located at McCormick Place, Lakeside Center, Hall D. Professional consultants will be on hand to assist you.

And While You're in Chicago, Your Kids Can Attend Camp ACS

An exciting on-site program tailored especially for the children of attendees at the Clinical Congress has been arranged for this year's meeting in Chicago. The College will once again be partnering with ACCENT on Children's Arrangements, Inc., a nationally recognized professional child care company organized to provide on-site children's activities in a nurturing, safe, and educational environment. From Sunday, October 8, through Wednesday, October 11, your child (ren) can participate in activities such as arts and crafts, active games, movies and much, much more. It is ACCENT's goal to entertain your child (ren) in a safe environment so you can attend the Clinical Congress with the peace of mind that they are being taken care of and having a great time too. Children ages six months to 12 years are welcome to participate in Camp ACS. For further information, visit <http://www.facs.org/clincon2006/socialcampacs.html>.

Highlights from the 2006 Clinical Congress Planning Guide for RAS

- **Annual Council of Representatives (COR) Meeting** will take place the morning of **Sunday, October 8, 2006**, from 8 am to 12 noon at the Hyatt McCormick, Regency Ballroom C.
- Program for surgery residents at all PGY levels entitled **“Essential Skills for Surgical Practice: A Primer for Residents.”** The program’s two half-day sessions are sponsored by the ACS Division of Education. Early registration on <http://www.facs.org> is encouraged, as space is limited.
- Annual RAS symposium: **"Acute Care Surgery – Improving Outcomes or Fragmenting Care?"** to be held on **Sunday October 8, 2006, 1 - 4 pm, Hyatt McCormick, Regency Ballroom AB.**

See the next edition of *RAS-ACS News* for more details.

C. Suzanne Cutter, MD

Chair, RAS-ACS Communications Committee
New York, NY

Upcoming Dates:

A special 2006 Clinical Congress Planning Guide for RAS members will be published as an eNewsletter during **September 2006**

“Call Room” submissions are due **September 30, 2006**

The ACS Clinical Congress will be held in Chicago **October 8 – 12, 2006**

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 member of the Candidate Group or an Associate Fellow of the American College of Surgeons. Candidate Group 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 2,700 Associate Fellows and 4,400 Candidate Group members 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 registration and access to CME credit
- reduced pricing on *SESAP*
- 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-ac/index.html>

How to Join RAS-ACS: <http://www.facs.org/ras-ac/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 Peg Haar at ras-news@facs.org



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633 N Saint Clair St, Chicago, IL 60611-3211