Improving the quality of surgical care leads to greater access for patients, fewer complications, and better outcomes, thus lowering the cost of care. For over a century, the American College of Surgeons (ACS) has implemented leading quality improvement programs for surgical patients.

ACS programs have improved quality in trauma, cancer, breast care, bariatric and metabolic surgery, children’s surgery, and overall surgical care. Geriatric surgery is the next area of focus for the College’s surgical quality improvement efforts. Standards for the new ACS Geriatric Surgery Verification Program, introduced in July 2019, encompass the underpinnings of already successful quality improvement programs, which are based on four key principles: set the standards, build the right infrastructure, use the right data, and verify with outside experts.

ACS’ enduring commitment to quality is reflected in the many initiatives that it has developed, including:

- **1917:** Issuing minimum standards for hospitals, a program now known as The Joint Commission.
- **1922:** Creating the Commission on Cancer (CoC), which today has accredited more than 1,500 cancer centers in the U.S., treating 70 percent of all newly diagnosed cancers.
- **1950:** Forming the Committee on Trauma (COT), which today sets forth standards for optimal care of injured patients through its nationally recognized trauma center verification program.
- **1998:** Launching the American College of Surgeons Surgical Oncology Group to conduct surgical clinical trials in cancer care. In 2012, ACOSOG merged with the North Central Cancer Treatment Group (NCCTG) and Cancer and Leukemia Group B (CALGB) to form the Alliance for Clinical Trials in Oncology (Alliance).
- **2004:** Bringing the ACS National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS NSQIP®), which originated in the Department of Veterans Affairs, into the private sector and fostering its subsequent expansion and improvement.
- **2005:** Establishing a more specialized cancer accreditation program by launching the National Accreditation Program for Breast Centers (NAPBC).
- **2012:** Expanding the reach of its former ACS Bariatric Surgery Center Network (BSCN), established in 2005, by collaborating with the American Society for Metabolic and the Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) to create a jointly run program, the Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Accreditation and Quality Improvement Program (MBSAQIP), which has accredited more than 800 centers.
- **2017:** Bringing surgical quality improvement to children’s hospitals with the introduction of the Children’s Surgery Verification Program.
- **2018:** Introducing a new specialized cancer accreditation program through the launch of the National Accreditation Program for Rectal Cancer (NAPRC).
- **2019:** Launching a new surgical quality improvement program tailored to meet the specialized needs of older adults facing surgery through the Geriatric Surgery Verification (GSV) Program. GSV is an outgrowth of the work of more than 50 stakeholder organizations who were part of the Coalition for Quality in Geriatric Surgery, supported by the John A. Hartford Foundation.

These initiatives have measurably improved surgical quality, and have prevented complications, reduced costs, and saved lives. Inclusion of these programs in hospitals around the country has helped physicians provide the highest standards of care.

*July 2019*