

AMERICAN MEDICAL FOUNDATION

For Peer Review & Education

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237 SOUTH 18TH STREET

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19103-6164

Divisions

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www.medicalfoundation.org

TELEPHONE
215-545-6363

FAX
215-545-2163

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

TELEMENTORING—THE NEW SURGICAL TOOL

PHILADELPHIA, PA — For the first time in the United States, several surgical specialty societies will join together in a program to determine whether telementoring can provide an effective means for doctors to learn new skills and improve old ones. If successful, this initiative could establish the model for efficient transfer of knowledge and skills from experienced practitioners to recent graduates or learning surgeons who seek training on new or complex techniques and procedures.

The program will be funded by a grant provided by the Foundation for Advanced Medical Education (FAME), a division of the American Medical Foundation for Peer Review and Education, based in Philadelphia. This grant will enable the Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES), American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery (ASMBS) and International Pediatric Endosurgical Group (IPEG) to utilize telementoring solutions that enable accomplished surgeons to watch and participate in surgery from a remote site, to teach less-experienced surgeons new techniques by instructing them in real-time as advisors or "hands on" partners to improve their skills.

The grant is being generously supported by KARL STORZ Endoscopy-America, Inc., a leader in OR integration technologies, and InTouch Health®, the world leader in Remote Presence healthcare solutions. The companies are lending remote presence devices to the preceptors who will help doctors operate with more confidence. KARL STORZ has combined its OR1® System with InTouch Health's Remote Presence Technology to provide powerful new solutions for telemedicine and telementoring. Called VisitOR1™, the system gives remote surgeons seamless connectivity to Ors, Ers, and CCUs. Using high-speed Internet connections, surgeons can remotely control the VisitOR1™ system positioned above the surgical field, providing surgeons with fully immersive and collaborative experiences.

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The study to improve skills in bariatric surgery being performed by SAGES and ASMBS will be led by Dr. Ninh T. Nguyen, Chief, Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery, at the University of California, Irvine, CA. On his team as "telementors" will be some of the nation's leading surgeons from Harvard, Duke, University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, University of Virginia and Mount Sinai Hospital, NY. The team will target complex bariatric operations for mentoring such as laparoscopic Roux-en-Y gastric bypass and laparoscopic sleeve gastrectomy.

The grant to SAGES working with IPEG will support the study headed by a world leader in pediatric endoscopic surgery, Dr. Steven Rothenberg, Chief of Pediatric Surgery and the Chairman of the Department of Pediatrics, Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children, Denver, CO. Several nationally prominent pediatric surgeons will join as telementors to teach new procedures, including laparoscopic Nissen Fundoplication and neonatal procedures such as laparoscopic pull-through for imperforate anus or duodenal atresia repair.

About KARL STORZ

KARL STORZ Endoscopy-America, Inc., is an affiliate of KARL STORZ GmbH & Co. KG, an international leader for 65 years in reusable endoscope technology, encompassing all endoscopic specialties. Based in Tuttlingen, Germany, KARL STORZ GmbH & Co. KG is a family-owned company that designs, engineers, manufactures, and markets all its products with an emphasis on visionary design, precision craftsmanship and clinical effectiveness. For more information, call (800) 421-0837 or visit the company's Web site at www.karlstorz.com.

About InTouch Health

InTouch Health provides comprehensive telemedicine solutions that enable physicians to perform real-time consults with hospital patients. Through a single interface, physicians can access a host of FDA-cleared Remote Presence devices to provide and document care into emergency rooms, critical care units, patient wards and operating rooms. Wherever access to medical expertise is limited, InTouch Health's Remote Presence telemedicine solutions can effectively extend the physician's reach to manage patient care, thereby removing critical time and distance barriers. The Company has more than 300 hospital locations on six continents using Remote Presence to deliver specialty care services such as stroke, critical care coverage, cardiology, trauma, pediatrics, neonatology, psychiatry, patient rounds, translation services, clinical education and surgical/procedure mentoring. For more information, please visit www.intouchhealth.com

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About the American Medical Foundation

- The American Medical Foundation for Peer Review & Education (AMF) is the only non-profit organization in the United States for independent hospital and medical staff peer review and on-site physician continuing education. Since 1987 they have been conducting assessment of institutional quality of care and physician competency for 2800 hospitals, their healthcare corporations and state agencies carrying out quality-of-care regulations, all to improve patient safety. Their Residency Program Consultation Council (RPCC) assists in correcting residency program deficiencies which lead to adverse actions promulgated by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGM).
- In 2001, the Foundation for Advanced Medical Education (FAME), the educational division of AMF, received a \$2,000,000 grant to create a template for future training and for retraining of practicing community surgeons, in both current skills and in the utilization of new procedures and technology. FAME administered this grant, implemented by six specialty societies, including: the American College of Surgeons (ACS), the Society of Thoracic Surgeons/the American Association of Thoracic Surgeons (STS/AATS), the American College of Cardiology (ACC), the Society for Vascular Surgery (SVS), and the Society for Cardiac Angiography and Interventions (SCA&I).
- The results of this FAME three-step pilot showed the model (didactic, simulation and preceptoring) to be highly effective in teaching new procedures to practicing clinicians. The essence of the preceptee /preceptor model is interactive and is fundamental to the learning experience. However, such impediments as travel, conflicting schedules and patient or physician postponement can often lead to cancellations of the necessary sufficient planned interactions. Thus, in a grant to SAGES, ASMBS and IPEG telementoring is now being tested to determine if it will be useful in the transition from the training environment to the primary practice environment as a practical enhancement and/or efficient alternative.

For additional information:

Evelyn Baram-Clothier, Executive Director

Foundation for Advanced Medical Education (FAME)

American Medical Foundation for Peer Review and Education (AMF)

215-545-6363

Website: www.medicalfoundation.org