



Pennsylvania Surgical News

News & Updates for the Keystone and Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapters
American College of Surgeons

May 2020

As we continue to face the uncharted waters of the COVID pandemic, Pennsylvania is beginning to see movement toward opening some parts of the Commonwealth. Your surgical practice or hospital facility may be reviewing your strategic plans to restart surgical procedures and begin the process of getting back to a regular routine.

The American College of Surgeons has prepared a wealth of guidance documents and other resources to maintain and protect the safety and health of your patients and **YOU**. View the ACS COVID-19 [Clinical Guidance library](#).

If your practice or hospital facility has an action plan or tips on restarting surgical procedures that you would like to share with your Pennsylvania surgical colleagues, you can forward the information to our Chapter

Executive Director, Robbi Cook (rcook@rmcmanagementsolutions.com) for distribution on the ACS Pennsylvania State Community Page and via our Chapter email blasts.

We hope you enjoyed the inaugural issue of the ***Pennsylvania Surgical News*** last month. We received some great kudo comments from readers and hope you continue to find the newsletter a resource for information and pertinent content for the surgical community.

Both Chapters continue to look for additional ways to stay connected to our members and provide beneficial services to you. We encourage members to contribute interesting articles or items to be included in future issues. Contact our Executive Director, Robbi Cook at rcook@rmcmanagementsolutions.com.

Membership Dues Update

The Keystone and Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapters are continuing to work hard to provide the services that mean the most to you today and in the future. We understand you may have been financially impacted, or your institution has cut funding for association memberships, travel, and educational programs due to the COVID crisis. If you have not renewed, and are able, please submit your dues. If you cannot, we will wait and will work with you. But please contact us to talk about how we can better serve your needs and make it easier for you to continue your support of your local ACS Chapter. If you require a renewal invoice, please contact the Chapter office at 717-220-5255 or email [Keystone](#) or [Metro Philly](#).

Healthcare Immunity Bill Signed by Governor on May 6, 2020

Keystone and Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapters joined other specialty societies and the Pennsylvania Medical Society in an April 22nd letter sent to the Governor asking for consideration of measures to protect healthcare providers for actions taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Read the [Medical Liability Statement](#).

On May 6th, Governor Wolf signed an executive order to afford healthcare practitioners protection against liability for good faith actions taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although it does not provide overall coverage for all healthcare disciplines, it does assist some in preventing unnecessary legal action.

The Administration used its authority, during the course of the pandemic and the disaster declaration, to suspend regulations and regulatory statutes to supplement the healthcare workforce and assist in facilitating the deployment of retirees and out-of-state healthcare professionals, expand the scope of practice and relax supervisory requirements for a number of healthcare licensees. Steps taken brought individuals who have not previously maintained liability coverage and asked healthcare providers to perform acts they would not perform in their ordinary course of business.

“As the COVID-19 pandemic has required the Wolf Administration to take broad action to respond to and prepare for Pennsylvanians’ critical health care needs, so too has it required our health care providers to broaden their professional responsibilities and experiences like never before,” Governor Wolf stated in the May 6th press release. “This Executive Order to Enhance Protections for Health Care Professionals serves to protect the individuals serving on the front lines of the disaster response.”

The Executive Order:

- Grants immunity to any individual who holds a license, certificate, registration, or certification to practice a health care profession or occupation in Pennsylvania and who is engaged in providing COVID-19 medical and health treatment or services during the COVID-19 disaster emergency response. Immunity does not extend to acts or omissions that constitute a crime, gross negligence, or fraud, malice, or other willful misconduct;
- Extends immunity to those medical professionals in Pennsylvania that provide services in any health care facility as defined by the Health Care Facilities Act, as well as any nursing facility, personal care home, assisted living facility or any alternate care site, community-based testing site or non-congregate care facility used for the purpose of conducting emergency services activities or the provision of disaster services activities related to the Commonwealth’s COVID-19 disaster emergency response;
- Affirms immunity for any person, organization or authority allowing real estate or other premises used for emergency services without compensation in the case of death, injury, or loss or damage to the property of any person who is on the premises for the purpose of those emergency services; and
- Suspends or removes a host of regulatory barriers that would otherwise impede or prevent out-of-state, retired, or other qualified practitioners from providing services where needed in the Commonwealth.

The order was written in response to stakeholders requesting civil immunity for practitioners practicing good judgment under incredibly challenging circumstances resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The executive order is consistent with actions taken by neighboring states and is effective immediately. The order will remain in effect for the duration of the disaster emergency.

Read the full order [here](#).

CHAPTER ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL MEETING UPDATES

KEYSTONE CHAPTER

The Keystone Chapter's annual educational conference planning committee, chaired by Stanislaw Stawicki, MD, FACS, continues to move forward on plans for the fall conference. Current plans are to host an in-person conference at Geisinger-Danville on Friday, September 11, 2020.

The full-day schedule will include multiple lectures both clinical and related to best business practices. Break-out sessions geared for the various stages of a surgeons' career will provide an avenue for networking with colleagues and sharing of information. An Exhibit Hall will provide one-on-one opportunities to learn from our service providers on new techniques, devices, and other surgical supplies.

The annual Resident abstract poster competition will be expanded to include Case Study Reports. A Call for Abstract/Case Study submissions will be distributed to all program directors, residents, and medical students in the coming weeks. The top 12 submissions will be given an opportunity for an oral presentation during the day's lecture schedule and "quick-shot" sessions will provide an avenue for additional presentations throughout the day.

New this year and replacing our long-standing Surgical Jeopardy Tournament, will be a surgical skills competition. Teams comprised of one Resident and one Attending will work through multiple surgical skills stations. Teams will be scored on proper technique, accuracy, and completion time for each challenge station.

The Planning Committee continues to monitor the changing landscape of COVID-19 and will make appropriate changes to the schedule, including moving to a virtual format if necessary, to maintain the safety and health of our attendees, partners, and staff.

METRO PHILLY CHAPTER

The Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapter's annual joint dinner meeting was originally scheduled for Monday, May 18th at the Marriott – Philadelphia Old City. The Planning Committee and Chapter Council made the decision to postpone the meeting due to COVID.

The Planning Committee has rescheduled the meeting for Monday, November 9th at the Marriott – Philadelphia Old City. The format will be slightly different this year due to adjustments resulting from the COVID pandemic.

New this year is the inclusion of case study reports as part of the Research Project competition. Initial submissions will be judged and the top abstract or case study submitted will present their research project orally to all attendees.

The Exhibit Hall will open this year at 5:30 PM and remain open until 8:00 PM. Resident posters and case study report submissions will be incorporated into the Exhibit Hall this year, along with the reception stations and beverage service. This will provide additional opportunities for attendees to easily visit with our exhibitors and visit the poster presentations and network.

The Abstract/Case Study Report submission portal will re-open by July 1st. If you have already submitted, you do not need to re-submit. The Exhibitor portal will also reopen on July 1st.

Attendee registration will be open by July 15th and is open to all members and non-members.

MPACS Planning Committee continues to monitor the COVID situation in the City of Philadelphia and if necessary, will make appropriate changes to the schedule to maintain the safety and health of our attendees, exhibitor partners and staff.



Benefits of Joining Your Local ACS Chapter

Why belong to your local ACS Chapter?

Local Chapters offer

- opportunities to network with your colleagues in your backyard
- attend seminars and other educational events close to home
- monitor legislative and regulatory issues affecting Pennsylvania physicians
- looking for guidance or assistance with an issue, you can reach out to another member, close to home, that could be dealing with the same state-related issue

Healthcare associations, like Keystone and Metropolitan Philadelphia, represent the interests of physicians and the healthcare team. Focusing on the use of collective surgical knowledge the Chapters work in collaboration with the ACS to define standards and policy, provide educational opportunities and be a trusted voice in the surgical community.

Not a member? Join today at [KCACS](#) or [MPACS](#).

STAY UP TO DATE WITH ACS INFORMATION, GUIDANCE DOCUMENTS & MORE



The Keystone & Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapters are pleased to welcome the following new members who have joined since April 1, 2020:

Luis Cervantes, MD, FACS (Fellow)
Brian Frank, MD, FACS (Fellow)



The ACS Clinical Congress 2020 is scheduled to take place at McCormick Place in Chicago, IL from October 4 through 8.

Registration opens this month and special discounts are available for travel through United and hotel accommodations using ACS Clinical Congress' housing agency, OnPeak.

Immerse yourself in a wide variety of educational sessions that convey best surgical practices and address hot topics in surgery today.

For a complete list of events, registration and hotel information, click [here](#).



May Is National
STOP THE BLEED® Month

May is designated National **STOP THE BLEED**® Month. This is the second year for the national recognition and May 21, 2020 will mark the third annual National **STOP THE BLEED**® Day.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, hospitals and first responders are busy caring for COVID patients, but accidents and serious injuries are still occurring. During this year's national observance, messaging will be targeted to highlight the importance of **STOP THE BLEED**® knowledge, particularly with so many people required to stay at home.

Training classes are currently on hold, but it is still important for the general public to understand how to respond when a bleeding injury occurs. If you have already been trained in **STOP THE BLEED**®, you can spread the word on its importance by adding a National **STOP THE BLEED**® frame to your social media platform. Social media posts on the **STOP THE BLEED**® efforts will use the hashtags #NSTMB20 and #NSTBD20.

STOP THE BLEED® traces its origins to the aftermath of the Sandy Hook School shootings in December 2012. The ACS partnered with law enforcement and other national organizations to develop the Harford Consensus. An emergency response goal emerged from this group to improve survival following mass shootings and other international acts of mass violence by empowering civilians to take life-saving action when the need arises, regardless of the situation or cause of the significant bleeding. **STOP THE BLEED**® was launched in October 2015 as a national public awareness campaign by the White House with a call to action to being training more people to become immediate responders.

Learn more at <http://www.stopthebleed.org>

RASACS

RESIDENT AND ASSOCIATE SOCIETY



Cassie Sonntag, MD, a Resident at Penn State Hershey, is Chair of the RAS-ACS Education Committee. Cassie sits on the Keystone Council as a Resident Representative

The RAS-ACS group is still holding weekly "Take A Breath and Decompress" phone hangouts to talk about current events, concerns, or most importantly, to just hang out.

The Hangouts are open to all ACS RAS members and are geared to help fill the gap of cancelled didactic and operative education due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Follow the group on Twitter at [@RASACS](https://twitter.com/RASACS) for updates on topics. Due to issues with Zoom hackers, registration for the weekly sessions is required.

If you are a surgeon teaching medical students and residents and would like to share your video lecture (30-60 minutes of up-to-date material aimed at learners), please contact me (csonntag@pennstatehealth.psu.edu).

We will curate to a dedicated YouTube page that will be free. Full credit will be given to the presenters. Please include your affiliation and disclosures in the video/slide deck. The RAS-ACS thanks you for your commitment to continue the education of our Residents and Medical Students.

RAS-ACS is open to all surgical trainees and young surgeons and promotes programs and leadership opportunities in ACS and provides an avenue for opinions and concerns of surgical trainees and young surgeons to be heard by the ACS leadership.

Learn more about [RAS-ACS](#).



CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION (CME) REMINDER FOR PENNSYLVANIA PHYSICIANS

Just a reminder – 2020 is a licensure renewal year and the clock is ticking.

The Pennsylvania Board of Medicine (**PBM**) and the Pennsylvania Board of Osteopathic Medicine (**PBOM**) require all licensees to earn 100 CME Credits every two-year renewal cycle. A minimum of 20 of the 100 CME must be Category 1 Credits, and both licensing boards require content-specific CME be included in this total.

PBOM licensees must renew by October 31, 2020 and PBM licensees must renew by December 31, 2020. The requirements are detailed below:

- **100 Credit hours every two-years:** A minimum of 20 hours must be *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ (PBM)* or *AOA Category 1-A Credits (PBOM)*.
- **2 Credit hours addressing Pain Management/Addiction/Prescribing:** All prescribers or dispensers must complete at least two hours of continuing education in pain management, the identification of addiction or in the practices of prescribing or dispensing of opioids. This continuing education must be in *AMA Category 1 or 2 approved activities for the PBM* and may be in either *AOA Category 1 or 2 approved activities or AMA Category 1 or 2 approved activities* to meet the **PBOM** requirement.
- **2 Board-approved credit hours addressing Child Abuse Recognition/Reporting:** Two hours of Board-approved continuing education in child abuse recognition and reporting requirements must be completed for renewal or reactivation of a license.

- **12 Credit hours addressing Patient Safety/Risk Management:** At least 12 of the 100 hours must be completed in activities related to patient safety or risk management and may be completed in either *AMA Category 1 or 2 activities*. **This requirement is exclusive to the Pennsylvania Board of Medicine.**

The American College of Surgeons has compiled and posted summaries of these [State CME Requirements](#) for your convenience. The Keystone and Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapters and the American College of Surgeons (ACS) are committed to providing members with the highest quality educational resources and support to meet Continuing Medical Education (CME) requirements, for example:

- Monthly online *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™* and Self-Assessment Credit through your member subscription to the [Journal of the American College of Surgeons](#)
- Three free online [Safe Pain Control courses](#) totaling 4 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*.
- Coming soon! A new online 8-module course, *Optimizing Perioperative Pain Management: An Evidence-Based Approach*, will offer 8 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*
- [Clinical Congress 2019 Webcast packages](#) offer up to 175 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™* and 175 Self-Assessment Credits which can be tailored to a physician's interests or requirements, including Credit to Address Opioid/Pain Management and Patient Safety.
- Chapter Educational Conferences provide additional resources and offer up to 7.5 *AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™*.

State requirements are subject to change. Please contact mycme@facs.org or your [state medical board](#) if you have any questions or concerns. Individuals must check with their state to verify that course content meets specific CME requirements.

PENNSYLVANIA COVID-19 REOPENING PHASES

Governor Wolf and Secretary of Health, Dr. Rachel Levine, refer to the three phases of reopening the Commonwealth often during their daily press conferences. On May 8th, 24 counties will begin the process of transitioning from the “Red Phase” to the “Yellow Phase”. Those counties are primarily in the northern tier of the state and reopening is based on a formula calculating number of confirmed cases in the region to that county’s overall population. Wolf has emphasized a county can returned to a stricter phase if confirmed cases of COVID in that county show a substantial increase. The remainder of the state will remain under the “Red Phase” through June 4th.

The following chart provides details on each of the three phases for reopening the Commonwealth.

COVID-19 REOPENING PHASES	
WORK & CONGREGATE SETTINGS	SOCIAL SETTINGS
RED PHASE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LIFE-SUSTAINING BUSINESSES ONLY • RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR PRISON + CONGREGATE CARE • SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION • MOST CHILD CARE CLOSED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAY AT HOME ORDERED • LARGE GATHERINGS PROHIBITED • RESTAURANTS/BARS LIMITED TO CARRY-OUT + DELIVERY • ONLY TRAVEL FOR LIFE-SUSTAINING PURPOSES
YELLOW PHASE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TELEWORK MUST CONTINUE WHERE FEASIBLE • BUSINESSES WITH IN-PERSON OPERATIONS MUST FOLLOW SAFETY ORDERS • CHILD CARE OPEN WITH WORKER + BUILDING SAFETY ORDERS • RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR PRISON + CONGREGATE CARE • SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAY AT HOME RESTRICTIONS LIFTED IN FAVOR OF AGGRESSIVE MITIGATION • LARGE GATHERINGS PROHIBITED • IN-PERSON RETAIL ALLOWED CURBSIDE/DELIVERY PREFERRED • INDOOR RECREATION, HEALTH AND WELLNESS FACILITIES (SUCH AS GYMS, SPAS), AND ALL ENTERTAINMENT (SUCH AS CASINOS, THEATERS) REMAIN CLOSED • RESTAURANTS/BARS LIMITED TO CARRY-OUT + DELIVERY
GREEN PHASE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALL BUSINESSES MUST FOLLOW CDC AND PA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GUIDELINES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGGRESSIVE MITIGATION ORDERS LIFTED • INDIVIDUALS MUST FOLLOW CDC AND PA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GUIDELINES

The Keystone and Metropolitan Philadelphia Chapters continue to monitor the COVID-19 pandemic. Both chapters are focused on bringing additional ways for members to connect, share your experiences and offer educational opportunities in a virtual environment to keep our members safe and healthy. Stay tuned for additional information.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CARE

With today’s “new normal” our lives are quite different from just a few months ago. Being a physician has always been a stressful career, but now with the challenges and uncertainty the COVID-19 pandemic brings to the healthcare community, anxiety and stress have hit an all-time high. As your executive director, I hear your frustrations, but also your determination to get through this phase without sacrificing your oath to care for your patients and your families. Self-care is more important than ever during this critical time. I am a firm believer that you need to “find your Zen,” take time for yourself, clear your head, and come back refocused on the important tasks at hand.

You are not only a surgeon, but now an education professional for your children. Some of you may be providing care via telemedicine from your home office and juggling to find a quiet space in your home in order to care for your patients and provide them peace of mind. The family dog or cat is looking for attention because “their human” is now home all day and, if your dog is like mine, barks just at the wrong time when you are unmuted on that 10th Zoom conference call of the day.

Please take time to practice self-care. Here are some ideas to give your energy and focus a boost. I look forward to a time when we can all be together again!

