

# Department of Surgery Recent Events

## Aviation and Surgical Healthcare Come Together at American College of Surgeons *Inspiring Quality: Strong for Surgery* Event

Seattle hosted the latest stop in The American College of Surgeons' (ACS) Inspiring Quality national tour on April 11. The event joined two major Washington industries ~ aviation and surgical healthcare ~ to discuss ways to accelerate the spread of aviation-like safety, standardization and simulation across the practice of surgery. The evening also featured the launch of *Strong for Surgery*, an initiative aimed at expanding the use of checklists into surgeon's offices to improve patient outcomes. **Dr. Carlos A. Pellegrini**, FACS, FRCSI (Hon.), the Henry N. Harkins Professor and Chair, Department of Surgery, and the immediate past Chair of the ACS Board of Regents moderated the event.

Congressman Jim McDermott, US Representative Washington State's 7th district, provided opening remarks strongly endorsing *Strong for Surgery* and the partnership of aviation and surgery. The 12-term Congressman told the audience that "ideas like these are what I can bring back to Washington D.C. and say, 'this is happening in my state [and] this is the solution to health care change.'"

Dr. David Hoyt, the Executive Director of the ACS, also commended the work that has been accomplished in Washington State to advance healthcare quality. Dr. Hoyt commented that successful quality programs succeed with four key principles: use evidence based standards; provide the right infrastructure; use rigorous data; and, continuously verify results.

Alaska Airlines CEO-Elect Bradley Tilden talked about the ways in which surgery and aviation are remarkably similar. He strongly emphasized the need for using checklists that start early in the process, noting that a pilot would never start going over a checklist when the plane is already headed down the runway. Similarly, surgeons need to begin the checking process well before the patient comes for surgery.

Echoing the themes of Mr. Tilden, Vice-President of Engineering at Boeing Commercial Airplanes Keith Leverkusen stressed the importance of standardization. He described how Boeing's standardization efforts have allowed them to greatly increase output while continuing to innovate—which would not have been possible without standardization. Mr. Leverkusen challenged the assertion that standardization stifles innovation. Instead, he argued, the only way to truly innovate in any field, including surgery, is to standardize processes and procedures in order to provide the platform where innovation can thrive.

Following the leaders in aviation, **Dr. David Flum** (Associate Chair for Research and Professor in the Division of General Surgery) described and celebrated the successes within Washington State through the Surgical Care and



Back row: David Hoyt, MD, FACS, ACS Executive Director ~ Morris Johnson, MD, FACS Skagit Regional Clinics ~ David R. Flum, MD, MPH, FACS ~ Richard Billingham, MD, FACS Swedish Medical Center ~ Bradley Tidlen, CEO-Elect Alaska Air Group

Front row: Ellen Farrohki, MD, FACS, SCOAP Medical Director, Providence Regional Medical Center Everett ~ Keith Leverkusen, VP of Engineering and General Manager of Propulsion Systems for Boeing Commercial Airplanes ~ Carlos A. Pellegrini, MD, FACS, FRCSI (Hon.), the Henry N. Harkins Professor and Chair, Department of Surgery ~ Thomas K. Varghese, Jr., MD, FACS, ~ Stephen P. Zieniewicz, UWMCExecutive Director

Outcomes Assessment Program (SCOAP, [www.scoap.org](http://www.scoap.org)) and CERTAIN ([www.becertain.org](http://www.becertain.org)), the research network built on the SCOAP platform. Washington State has become a leader in safe, cost-effective surgery by getting the Surgical Checklist into operating rooms all across the state This effort needs to be expanded to the start of the surgical process—something that will be accomplished with the launch of *Strong for Surgery*.

**Dr. Thomas Varghese** (Assistant Professor in the Division of Cardiothoracic

Surgery) presented the details of *Strong for Surgery*, a multi-tiered plan to shine the spotlight on the doctor's office. The first stage of the initiative's checklist campaign will be to focus on the pre-surgical patient's nutrition; strong evidence links a patient's nutritional status to his or her chance of developing post-surgical complications.

The evening's event ended with a panel of some of the most renowned surgical leaders in Washington State who further discussed how the surgical community might join together to create change. The panel was composed of SCOAP Medical Director Dr. Ellen Farrohki of Providence Regional Medical Center, Dr. Richard Thirlby of Virginia Mason Medical Center, Dr. Scott Steele of Madigan Healthcare System, Dr. Morris Johnson of Skagit Regional Clinics, and Dr. Richard Billingham of Swedish Medical

Center. The panelists were joined by Mr. Tilden and Mr. Leverkusen and engaged the audience in a number of topics, including the difficulty of changing culture and rallying behind the right evidence based practices.

The ACS Inspiring Quality Tour promotes programs across the country that improve quality and increase value of health care services. The tour has been promoted in cities with major surgical institutions such as Chicago and Baltimore and will continue throughout the year.

## 2012 Schilling Research Symposium

Residents and fellows play an integral role in the vibrant research community of Department of Surgery. Each year, the most outstanding research projects are presented by surgical trainees at the John and Helen Schilling Research Symposium. January 27th marked the 18th year of the symposium. One indicator of our renewed focus on and ongoing growth of research within the Department was the submission of 31 abstracts—the most submissions for the Schilling Symposium in recent history.

Gerald Fried, MD, FRCS(C), FACS, *the Adair Family Chair of Surgical Education at Montreal General Hospital* was the distinguished guest lecturer and co-moderated for this year's symposium with Carlos A. Pellegrini, MD FACS, FRCSI (Hon.), *the Henry N. Harkins Professor and Chair, Department of Surgery*. Dr. Fried, in conjunction with several research faculty leaders from the department, evaluated each of the 22 presentations on multiple criteria; the top three presenters were each awarded honors and a cash amount to be used for academic endeavors. Dr. Thurston Drake, R3 in Dr. David Flum's lab, took first place with his presentation entitled *The ACGME Caseloads: Changes Over Two Decades*. Dr. Patrick Phelan, R3 in Dr. Michael Mulligan's lab, took second place with his presentation entitled *Toll-Like Receptor 4 Mediated Lung Ischemia-Reperfusion Injury: Signaling Beyond MYD88*; and, Dr. Callie Thompson, R3 in Dr. O'Keefe's lab took third place with her presentation, *Toll-Like Receptor 1 Polymorphisms and Associations with Outcomes in Sepsis Following Traumatic Injury*.

A new feature for the Schilling Symposium was the introduction of five Department faculty presenters. **Drs. Saman Arbabi** (*Professor, Division of Trauma & Critical Care Medicine*); **Eileen Bulger** (*Professor, Division of Trauma & Critical Care Medicine*); **Alec Clowes** (*Professor & V. Paul Gavora/Helen and John Schilling Endowed Chair in Vascular Surgery*); **David Flum** (*Professor & Associate Chair for Research*); **Michael Mulligan** (*Professor, Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery*)



Drs. Thurson Drake and Kenneth Gow

& *The UW Medicine Distinguished Endowed Professorship in Lung Transplant Research*) and **Raymond Yeung** (*Professor, Division of General Surgery*). The faculty presentations described the work taking place within their respective research units and highlighted the many successes of their faculty colleagues in addition to providing framing remarks for trainee presentations. Participants at the Research Symposium found that the addition of the faculty review of research to the day's program helped to emphasize and promote the importance of research within the Department.

Following the symposium, Dr. Fried gave the event's keynote lecture, *Teaching Johnny How to Operate: Answering the "Bell."* Dr. Fried's lecture focused on the importance of giving residents the right tools and experience during their education to ensure these future surgeons are equipped to treat a patient population of increasing complexity.

The Helen and John Schilling endowment was created to enhance the Department of Surgery's commitment to the highest standards in patient care, teaching, research and scholarship. The endowment enables the Department of Surgery to continue to foster the development of trainee research and supports an annual lectureship that features a renowned visiting scholar. The Schilling's legacy continues to be honored each year through this day devoted to celebrating meaningful research.