

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 Farrohi, 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) and CERTAIN (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 Farrohi 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