

CHICAGO, Nov. 11, 2013 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- On Friday, November 8, The American College of Surgeons (ACS) hosted the *ACS Surgical Health Care Quality Forum Arizona*, the 14th

program in a series of events to drive national discussions on effective quality improvement methods that surgeons, physicians, and hospitals are using to improve patient safety and reduce costs.

The forum featured a panel of Arizona health care leaders from hospitals, medical schools, academic institutions, and the government who discussed the implementation and utilization of quality improvement programs to increase the value of health care.

"Amidst the national dialogue surrounding patient access to health insurance, surgeons and health care providers must continue to focus their efforts on ensuring the delivery of patient care is the highest quality possible," said forum host Steven B. Johnson, MD, FACS, FCCM, professor and chairman (Banner/VA), department of surgery, University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix; program director, Phoenix integrated surgical residency program, Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center; President, Arizona Chapter of the American College of Surgeons.

Forum speakers underscored the critical role that quality data, measurement, and reporting have in the future of health care delivery, using the ACS National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS NSQIP®) as a leading and successful model giving surgeons reliable data to help pinpoint areas for improvement. ACS NSQIP is unique from other quality programs because it uses risk- and procedure mix-adjusted data that are taken from the patient's medical chart, not insurance claims, and based on 30-day patient outcomes.

"We know through published data and countless anecdotes that quality improvement programs, like ACS NSQIP, improve patient care and save valuable health care dollars," said David B. Hoyt, MD, FACS, ACS Executive Director. "As CMS and others start tying clinical data and outcome measures to value-based purchasing, hospitals have a reputational and financial incentive to participate in these tried-and-true programs."

Keynote speaker, Arizona State Representative Heather Carter (R-LD 15), said, "The recent Medicaid Restoration Program implemented in Arizona is an important example of how we have upheld the will of the Arizona voters who have twice voted to ensure our residents have access to high-quality health care. Implementing this program was the most fiscally responsible decision for our great state and helps stop the out of control rising costs of uncompensated care."

Additional comments from forum presenters included:

- John A. Hensing, MD, FACP, *executive vice president and CMO, Banner Health* "Clinical excellence and quality improvement programs not only result in improved patient outcomes but are essential for health systems and hospitals today. These efforts result in a reduction in waste, patient care complications, liability exposure and unsatisfied patients, all positively impacting a hospital's economic survival."

- Leila F. Barraza, JD, MPH, *deputy director, Network for Public Health Law – Western Region, fellow, Public Health Law and Policy Program, and adjunct professor of Law, Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University*

"The Affordable Care Act includes many provisions aimed at improving health care quality and lowering costs. It is helpful to understand and recognize the specific aspects of the law that will impact the quality of health care, such as the creation of accountable care organizations and certain changes to Medicare."

- Stuart D. Flynn, MD, *dean, University of Arizona College of Medicine – Phoenix* "For many years, medical schools did not emphasize the importance of quality improvement to residents. We now realize how important it is to engrain concepts of quality assurance and health care economics into students so that they can understand the crucial role these issues will have in their future careers."

- Nirav Y. Patel, MD, FACS, *vice-chairman for quality and patient safety, department of surgery, Banner Good Samaritan Medical Center* "In order for

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organizations to improve care, they need access to the right data. Clinical, risk-adjusted outcomes data give physicians critical insights into their performance, allowing them to improve their work and ultimately the care they provide."

Since launching its *Inspiring Quality* initiative in 2011, ACS has hosted 14 community forums with health care leaders across the nation in an effort to foster discussions and collect best practices about surgical quality programs that advance patient care and measurably improve outcomes.

Full video of the Arizona forum will be available at InspiringQuality.facs.org and on the College's [YouTube channel](#) in the coming days.

About the American College of Surgeons The American College of Surgeons is a scientific and educational organization of surgeons that was founded in 1913 to raise the standards of surgical practice and improve the quality of care for surgical patients. The College is dedicated to the ethical and competent practice of surgery. Its achievements have significantly influenced the course of scientific surgery in America and have established it as an important advocate for all surgical patients. The College has more than 79,000 members and is the largest organization of surgeons in the world. For more information, visit

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