

## Looking forward

A few months ago, I wrote about the Point/Counterpoint for Acute Care Surgery course that takes place annually under the direction of L.D. Britt, MD, MPH, FACS, FCCM, FRCSEng(Hon), FRCSEd(Hon), FWACS(Hon), Past-President of the American College of Surgeons (ACS).<sup>\*</sup> As follow-up to that piece, this column focuses on another program that encompasses acute care—Trauma, Critical Care & Acute Care Surgery, which is presented annually at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, NV.

### *Long-running program*

This year marks the 45th anniversary of the ACS' continuing medical education sponsorship of a course on trauma and emergency care in the Western states. Approximately five years ago, this course expanded its focus from trauma and critical care to include acute care surgery, bringing early recognition to this emerging discipline. The goal of this program has always been to provide clinicians with the skills they need to make complex surgical decisions and apply advanced surgical techniques.

Four Fellows of the College have chaired this program—John Batdorf, Cuthbert Owen, Henry Cleveland, and for the past 20 years, Kenneth Mattox (all MD, FACS). Dr. Mattox is Distinguished Service Professor in the Michael E. DeBakey Department of Surgery at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston, TX. Under Dr. Mattox's leadership, the Trauma, Critical Care & Acute Care Surgery Conference has become the largest program of its type. Word-of-mouth endorsements have led to this course being oversubscribed for the past 12 years, and of the more than 1,300 attendees each year, approximately 80 percent or greater are physicians. Indeed, it is now one of the longest-running and best-attended trauma programs in the world.

The course is designed to provide clinicians with an understanding of the following:

- Innovative and appropriate techniques and technology for optimal care of the injured or seriously ill patients in urban and rural settings
- Treatments, techniques, and technology for optimal care in the critical care setting
- Application of concepts gleaned from urban and rural trauma and acute care surgery cases to the practice setting



**“ Dr. Mattox designs the course content to provide information that promotes positive change in practices, and the vast majority of calls and e-mails he receives after the conference indicate that this goal is being achieved.”**

- Practical exposure techniques and guidelines for management of injuries
- Appropriate surgical response to injuries and illness with added complicating factors
- The ethical dilemmas of trauma and critical care
- Management, technology, and techniques for optimal care of diverse trauma and critical care-related issues

The selected faculty includes the best and most inspiring surgical educators, and time is allotted to provide significant interaction among the faculty and the attendees. Dr. Mattox designs the course content to provide information that promotes positive change in practices, and the vast majority of calls and e-mails he receives after the conference indicate that this goal is being achieved. The course has been described as “Like drinking water from a fire hydrant, and the most intense educational experience of a lifetime.” As someone who has served on the faculty of this

<sup>\*</sup>Hoyt, David B. Looking forward. *Bull Am Coll Surg.* 96(11):4-6.

---

conference, I can attest to the repeated success of this program.

The next offering of this program will occur March 26–28, at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas. This year's program committee comprises Dr. Mattox; Raul Coimbra, MD, PhD, FACS, the Monroe E. Trout Professor of Surgery and chief of the division of trauma, surgical critical care, and burns at the University of California, San Diego, School of Medicine; Matthew J. Wall, Jr., MD, FACS, professor, DeBakey Department of Surgery, and chief of thoracic surgery at Ben Taub General Hospital in Houston; Alison Wilson, MD, FACS, director of the Jon Michael Moore Trauma Center and chief of trauma, emergency surgery and surgical critical care at West Virginia University in Morgantown; and Mary Allen, program coordinator and administrative associate for the DeBakey Department of Surgery at Baylor.

#### *Disaster management*

Five years ago, Dr. Mattox added a mini-course titled Medical Disaster Response, which takes place immediately before the Trauma, Critical Care & Acute Care Surgery Course. Medical Disaster Response focuses on the clinical realities of providing care in mass casualty/disaster situations—practical knowledge that surgical and emergency providers can take home and implement to improve institutional disaster response plans. The information presented is relevant to all members of the institution-based trauma care team—physicians, nurses, other hospital personnel, field personnel, and others—and emphasizes that the trauma center, regardless of level, is the foundation of the disaster medical response system. This course is one of the few that solely focuses on the clinical and medical aspects of disaster planning and management, rather than on the civic, public health, incident command, and shelter issues.

The objectives of this year's program are to help attendees carry out the following activities:

- Develop strategies for triage, surge, regional collaboration, and communication
- Generate policies to manage in-hospital and community-wide decreases in services during disaster situations
- Apply concepts and lessons learned from previous mass casualty events and military experience
- Make the difficult ethical decisions unique to disaster and mass casualty situations

The course is specifically designed for frontline

clinical personnel who are thrust into disaster situations and are trying to save lives and limbs, often with limited space and resources. As in the Trauma, Critical Care and Acute Care Surgery Course, faculty are selected for their expertise and first-hand experience in medical disaster response, and the program is designed to present maximum content in formats most conducive to learning.

Specific catastrophic situations that will be examined at this year's meeting include the tornado that devastated Joplin, MO, and the bombing and shooting rampage that occurred in Oslo, Norway, in 2011. Medical Disaster Response 2012 will take place March 25 at Caesars Palace.

#### *Preparing surgeons*

The ACS Committee on Trauma and the College as a whole continue to take great pride in the presentation and co-sponsorship of courses that provide surgeons and allied providers with the skills and knowledge they need to care for critically injured patients. I would encourage all Fellows to visit <http://www.facs.org/trauma/cme/traumtgs.html> to learn about the trauma courses the College cosponsors. To learn about or register for Trauma, Critical Care and Acute Care Surgery and/or Medical Disaster Response 2012, go to the website, [www.trauma-criticalcare.com](http://www.trauma-criticalcare.com).



*David B. Hoyt, MD, FACS*

---

If you have comments or suggestions about this or other issues, please send them to Dr. Hoyt at [lookingforward@facs.org](mailto:lookingforward@facs.org).