



For Immediate Release

June 9, 2010

Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates (SGNA) and the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) Issue Joint Statement on JAMA Study Regarding Infection Control at Ambulatory Surgical Centers

The recent study from the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (June 9, 2010) assessing infection control at Ambulatory Surgical Centers (ASC) in the U.S. highlights the importance of maintaining high-quality infection control practices. From basic hand washing and safe injection practices to following guidelines established by medical societies and manufacturer instructions for equipment reprocessing, medical practitioners must keep infection control a top priority for patient safety.

The study found that of 68 centers in three states participating in a pilot inspection program, about two-thirds had a lapse in infection control practices in at least one of five infection control categories. The study did not look into whether any of the lapses led to patient infections and study authors noted that the results may not be generalizable to all ASCs.

Endoscopy is a well-tolerated and safe procedure, and is one of many procedures that are performed in ASCs. The risks of infection from a gastrointestinal endoscopy are very small, at approximately 1 in 1.8 million or less. When cleaning and high-level disinfection are performed appropriately, in accordance with published SGNA and ASGE guidelines, no episodes of transmission of infection have been reported. It is critical that compliance with existing guidelines be maintained.

SGNA and ASGE are committed to setting the highest-quality standards for gastrointestinal endoscopy through safety guidelines and the training of their members so that patients receive the best and safest care possible. In addition to developing quality guidelines, ASGE also offers the ASGE Endoscopy Unit Recognition Program, which recognizes those endoscopy units that, in addition to following safety and quality guidelines, have completed a course designed specifically to review principles of quality and safety in endoscopy.

For more information on SGNA and ASGE guidelines, log on to www.sgna.org and www.asge.org.

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About the Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates, Inc.

The Society of Gastroenterology Nurses and Associates, Inc. is a professional organization of more than 8,300 nurses and associates dedicated to the safe and effective practice of gastroenterology and endoscopy nursing. SGNA carries out its mission by advancing the science and practice of gastroenterology and endoscopy nursing through education, research, advocacy and collaboration. SGNA provides continuing education programs and services that promote the professional development of its members in an atmosphere of mutual support. Additional information is available at the SGNA Web site, www.sgna.org.

About the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

Since its founding in 1941, the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) has been dedicated to advancing patient care and digestive health by promoting excellence in gastrointestinal endoscopy. ASGE, with more than 11,000 members worldwide, promotes the highest standards for endoscopic training and practice, fosters endoscopic research, recognizes distinguished contributions to endoscopy, and is the foremost resource for endoscopic education. Visit www.asge.org and www.screen4coloncancer.org for more information and to find a qualified doctor in your area.

About Endoscopy

Endoscopy is performed by specially-trained physicians called endoscopists using the most current technology to diagnose and treat diseases of the gastrointestinal tract. Using flexible, thin tubes called endoscopes, endoscopists are able to access the human digestive tract without incisions via natural orifices. Endoscopes are designed with high-intensity lighting and fitted with precision devices that allow viewing and treatment of the gastrointestinal system.