

Dear Friends of PAACS:

*As Covid19 continues to plague Africa, we are pleased that vaccinations are become available and that many of our PAACS personnel and graduates have received their first injection. The manpower needs are becoming critical – pray with us that the restrictions to travel will soon disappear.*

*Another virtual PAACS Board Meeting was successfully held – please read this Bulletin to stay up to date. Please note our newly modified vision and mission statements in the masthead.*

*We are excited about what God will do in the next 25 years!*


*The Editor*

**OUR MISSION:**

PAACS' mission is to glorify God by training and discipling African surgeons and related specialists to become Christ-like leaders and servants providing excellent and compassionate care to those most in need.


**OUR VISION:**

PAACS envisions a growing number of African surgeons and related specialists living out the Gospel and ministering to the sick.



PAN-AFRICAN ACADEMY OF CHRISTIAN SURGEONS

# PAACS Bulletin



**Edition #202**

**April 2021**

## In This Newsletter

[From the Desk of the CEO](#)  
[PAACS Councils Meet Virtually](#)  
[PAACS Holds Virtual Spring Meeting](#)  
[Approval of 2 New General Surgery Programs](#)  
[PAACS Academic Dean Steps Down](#)  
[Thank you and Farewell to Dr. Hanna](#)  
[COVID Rescheduling Finally Overcome in Sodd](#)  
[Sodd – Saline Process Training & Spiritual Retreat](#)  
[News Shorts:](#)  
PAACS Resident Wins COSECSA Prize  
Record Number of PAACS Applicants  
PAACS Annual exams

PAACS Residents' Day of Prayer  
Ebola in Africa  
[Announcements:](#)  
Anesthesia Help Needed at Malamulo Adventist  
Short and Long-Term Surgeons Needed at SIM-Galmi  
Short and Long-Term Surgeons Needed at Bongolo  
Short and Long-Term Surgeons Needed at Harpur  
25<sup>th</sup> PAACS Anniversary Logo-wear Available  
Mark Your Calendar  
[Prayer Requests](#)

## FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO

Dear PAACS Family:

*With the continuation of the global Coronavirus pandemic, PAACS remains concerned about the safety and well-being of our leadership, staff, and PAACS family. As such, we are carrying on our work and meetings virtually. This includes our Spring Board of Directors meeting which was held virtually on Friday, April 23, 2021. It is our hope that we will be able to start meeting in person by this Fall.*

*In faith and anticipation that travel and meetings will start occurring by this Fall, the PAACS leadership is planning on a face-to-face meeting in Chicago at the Hilton Garden Inn. The meeting is currently scheduled for October 15-16, 2021. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend if you are interested in participating. It is our prayer that we will be able to once again meet and fellowship in person. Regardless, we will have a virtual component to the meeting for those who cannot travel to the meeting and for our colleagues from across the globe. However, safety is of primary importance. We will continue to monitor the situation and be ready to change the meeting to a fully virtual format if necessary. We continue to trust in God's plans.*

*Blessings,*

*Susan Koshy, JD, MPH  
Chief Executive Officer  
Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS)*

## DUE TO COVID, PAACS COUNCILS MEET VIRTUALLY

By Keir Thelander

As the Covid-19 pandemic has influenced almost all facets of life, PAACS council meetings have been no exception. Over the last 3 months, PAACS councils have adjusted to recent realities and made good use of zoom to assess, process, and plan for future endeavors for each discipline. Observationally, the work seems to proceed reasonably well in a zoom format, yet clearly missing is the fellowship with like-minded surgeons.

The General Surgery Council met to discuss 2 new programs, HVMM (Hopitaly Vaovao Mahafaly in Mandritsara, Madagascar) and Nkhoma Mission Hospital in Malawi. Since they were favorably impressed in their assessments of these sites, each was recommended to the PAACS Program Committee for approval to start with trainees in January 2022. Additionally, a new resident evaluation form has been rolled out, being a combination of the previous evaluation and a move towards utilizing the milestones approach. This example now exists and can serve as a template for each of the other disciplines to adapt this assessment to their context.

The Orthopedic Council also met virtually reviewing their exam process and discussing challenges at each of the three training sites. They are pleased to report an increasing number of faculty members at the SCH/CURE program in Ethiopia and look forward to an expansion in intake at this program in the coming years. More sobering were their discussions about the current challenges at the Tenwek Hospital Ortho program. Kijabe Hospital maintains their Ortho program as a top-notch orthopedic training site.

The Cardiothoracic Council meets regularly throughout the year. They recently debriefed on the examination process of our first CT graduate, which was an overwhelming eight hours. Additionally, they seek to engage in approaches to remote education, as the CT program has also been impacted by the loss of short-term faculty members during the pandemic.

The Pediatric Surgery Council met to discuss the possible expansion of the BethanyKids PAACS program in two ways, both in length by possibly extending the FCS portion of training to four years as well as in number of trainees by adding more residents and fellows. These things become possible because they now have 3 faculty members and a growing relationship with other pediatric surgeons in the region: Dr. Mike Ganey (Tenwek Hospital) and Dr. Edmond Ntaganda and Dr. Alain Jules (Kigali University Teaching Hospital).

The Neurosurgery Council has been pleased with the initiation of their program, having taken three trainees already into the program. They are pleased to report the hope of Dr. Fraser Henderson joining Dr. Will Copeland at Tenwek sometime late in 2021.

The Head and Neck Council met to discuss the significant challenges of essentially no short-term trainers to maintain the educational aspects of the program during the pandemic. This aspect coupled with the ongoing conflict in the zone around Mbingo, has prompted discussions about the longevity of the program in Cameroon, and brought up consideration of relocation of the program.

As one can see, much has been discussed and accomplished in these recent meetings. May the Lord continue to grow the PAACS family and grant wisdom for His future of our PAACS training programs and leadership.

## PAACS HOLDS VIRTUAL SPRING MEETING

By Susan Koshy

On Friday, April 23, 2021, PAACS held its third virtual Board of Directors meeting. This meeting provided an opportunity to commemorate PAACS 25-year milestone as a ministry. It was a delight to celebrate two and a half decades of God's faithfulness to PAACS.

The Open-Session of the meeting was attended by over 100 participants. The audience consisted of PAACS Board of Directors, leadership, faculty, as well as guests. Although we were unable to meet in person, these virtual conferences provide the bonus opportunity for people around the globe to participate.

Dr. Thomas Robey, PAACS Chairman, welcomed all participants to the Open-Session of the virtual meeting. Dr. David Thompson, PAACS Founder, in celebration of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, led off the meeting with a time of devotion and prayer. He thanked God for His faithfulness and challenged the audience to have stubborn faith when things may not be going well. He warned against murmuring and complaining but encouraged everyone to trust God in the midst of difficulties and trials. Dr. William Wood, PAACS Academic Dean, started off the administrative reports for PAACS by announcing that he would be retiring after 10 years with the ministry. This is a great loss for PAACS because Dr. Wood has provided tremendous wisdom and guidance to the PAACS surgical training programs. Following this time, Susan Koshy, PAACS Chief Executive Officer, presented an administrative summary of the PAACS ministry. She provided a historical overview of PAACS over 25 years and discussed the current and future work of the ministry. Dr. Keir Thelander, PAACS Executive Vice President, discussed the future growth of PAACS programs in Africa and potential new sites being considered to be a part of PAACS. He also provided a detailed update on each of the current PAACS programs. Dr. Ed Scearce, PAACS Spiritual Dean, then provided an update on the work of PAACS spiritually and the progress of updating the spiritual curriculum.

This year PAACS had a number of faculty as presenters during the Open-Session meeting. Dr. Jim Brown, PAACS Program Director at Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Cameroon, spoke about running a PAACS surgical training program in the midst of conflict. He expressed his heart and shared his experience and walk with God through this time of turmoil at Mbingo. Dr. Phillip Blasto, PAACS Program Director at AIC Litein Hospital in

Kenya, spoke about running a PAACS training program and shared his experience as a PAACS graduate leading this program at Litein. Dr. Beryl Akinyi, Assistant Program Director at AIC Kijabe Hospital in Kenya told about her experience of being a surgeon in Africa, as well as being a female surgeon. Finally, Dr. Tim Nunn, the Program Director for the Ethiopia/CURE Orthopedic Program discussed his experience in leading the PAACS/CURE orthopedic program in Ethiopia and training the next generation of orthopedic surgeons.

In addition to these presentations, Dr. Lance Plyer, Director of World Medical Mission, spoke about PAACS and WMM working together to provide surgical excellence in Africa. PAACS Committee Chairs then provided reports during the Open-Session meeting. The Chairs provided an update on the work of their Committees and future actions that are being considered. Each of the Committees met virtually prior to the meeting to bring forth actions and ideas to be considered by the PAACS Board of Directors.

The PAACS Open-Session of the Board meeting concluded by early afternoon and moved into the Closed-Session with the PAACS Board of Directors and administration members only.

During the Closed-Session of the meeting, the Board of Directors approved the minutes from the previous meeting, then reviewed and accepted changes to the PAACS board policy manual as presented by the Governance Committee. They also reviewed and accepted the PAACS 2021-2022 budget (over 3 million dollars for the first time) as recommended by the Finance Committee.

The PAACS Board of Directors is in the midst of a five-year strategic-planning process. The Board of Director recently crafted and approved a new mission and vision statement for the ministry.

***New Mission Statement:***

*PAACS' mission is to glorify God by training and discipling African surgeons and related specialists to become Christ-like leaders and servants providing excellent and compassionate care to those most in need.*

***NEW Vision Statement:***

*PAACS envisions a growing number of African surgeons and related specialists living out the Gospel and ministering to the sick.*

During the course of the Closed-Session meeting, the Board also approved the development of four new strategic initiatives upon which the strategic plan would be built.

A new PAACS Grievance Policy was approved. The Grievance Policy is for both residents and faculty and provides a mechanism to solicit engagement from PAACS for specific issues. The Board also approved a Statement on PAACS' Responsibility and Role with Faculty. This statement was developed in conjunction with current and former PAACS faculty and PAACS administration. The Board also voted to require a Spiritual Assessment tool to be utilized annually as a part of the discipleship portion of PAACS programs.

Exciting news that came from the Board meeting included the approval of two new PAACS General Surgery programs. As recommended by the various committees and general surgery council, they approved a new program at the Hopitaly Vaovao Mahafaly Mandritsara in Madagascar and a program at Nkhoma Mission Hospital in Malawi to begin training in January 2022. Please see the article in this edition.

The Board accepted the resignation of Dr. William Wood and approved Dr. John "Tarp" Tarpley as the new PAACS Academic Dean. Dr. Tarpley will be taking on this role by September 2021. See the accompanying article.

The Board then ratified the appointment of Dr. Peter Ekeh as the new African Representative on the Board to complete the term of Dr. Charles Adisa, who passed away in December of 2020. Dr. Ekeh, a faculty member at Wright State



A. Peter Ekeh

University and the North American representative for the West African College of Surgeons, will provide balance and new perspectives to the Board, and we welcome him as a member of the Board of Directors.

The PAACS Spring Board of Directors Meeting was successful, and much was accomplished in a short period of time. We hope to meet in-person October 15-16 in Chicago for the Fall PAACS Board of Directors Meeting.

## **PAACS APPROVES 2 NEW GENERAL SURGERY PROGRAMS**

By Keir Thelander

At the PAACS Board meeting on April 23rd, the Board received a proposal from the Program Committee to approve and begin two new programs in General Surgery, Nkhoma Mission Hospital in Malawi, and Hopitaly Vaovao Mahafaly in Mandritsara, Madagascar. The General Surgery Council had reviewed the application of both of these sites.

Reviewing the potential impact in Malawi, the Board was reminded of the reality of a population of 15 million with less than 50 trained surgeons. Located about 1 hour south of the Malawian capital of Lilongwe, in preparation for the PAACS program, Nkhoma Mission Hospital is undergoing a major transformation in facilities as they plan for new surgical, recovery, and ward buildings. Thanks to their many partners these projects have also included new housing units. Most assuredly, this NMH expansion will broaden its service provision and influence in the region. PAACS future faculty members are COSECSA-certified Drs. Jens Vaylann, Rodrick Banda and PAACS ALMC graduate Yamakani Limbe. Later this year, they will be joined by Dr. Beth Stuebing. They anticipate accepting 2 residents in January 2022.

HVMM (Hopitaly Vaovao Mahafaly Mandritsara) was also approved to begin training in January 2022. Located about a 24-hour road trip northeasterly from the capital of Madagascar, Antananarivo, it is about a 1-hour flight by mission plane. Madagascar has about 94 surgeons for a population of 28 million people. HVMM too is undergoing significant facilities improvements in preparation for hosting a PAACS training program which would be the first PAACS program in Madagascar. PAACS has had 6 Malagasy graduates who have returned to Madagascar. COSECSA Fellows Drs. Ted Watts, PAACS Graduate Marco Faniriko, and Jeshiah Thiessen, are already on site at HVMM. The immense need for Christian surgeons in Madagascar is highlighted well by the comment from Dr. Marco Faniriko that he would be willing to move wherever is needed to begin a PAACS program in Madagascar.

Thank you to these surgeons who see the big vision in training and discipleship while they live out 2 Timothy 2:2. Sensing the call and stepping out in faith, the Board approved both of these programs to begin training in January 2022. The Boards' favorable response to these programs despite the expense is due to the recognition of PAACS' current good financial status and the recognition that we as an organization serve Jehovah-Jireh (the God who provides). PAACS looks forward to training and discipling Christian surgeons at NMH and HVMM for years to come, responding not only to the surgical workforce needs of Malawi and Madagascar, but more importantly, the spiritual needs of the Malawian and Malasy people.



## PAACS ACADEMIC DEAN STEPS DOWN

By Keir Thelander



PAACS is indebted to Dr. William Wood for his faithful service as Academic Dean over the course of a decade. Dr. Wood was the trailblazer in this position, taking the position in 2012. In that role, Dr. Wood has been known as an advocate for high quality training standards, while insisting on fulfilling PAACS' mission of discipleship. Dr. Wood attended many PAACS meetings, represented PAACS to the West African College of Surgeons, visited many of the programs, and advised on a myriad of resident and program academic issues, and provided valuable insights into many areas of PAACS administration.

When Dr. Bill Wood accepted the position of Academic Dean, he had recently retired as Professor of Surgery in the Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia, where he had previously held the position as Chairman of the Department of Surgery. He is a surgical oncologist and world-renowned in the treatment of breast cancer, Wood was a graduate cum laude of Wheaton College and Harvard Medical School. His surgical training was at Harvard's Massachusetts General Hospital and he continued on as faculty at the Harvard Medical School and MGH until 1990 when he moved to Atlanta. He had been active in multiple international trials and surgical oncology advisory groups, served on journal editorial boards (presently is the Editor-in-Chief of the journal "Oncology") and had authored or co-authored over 270 medical articles, 38 textbook chapters and 7 medical books.

Dr. Wood, we are grateful for your sacrifice, time, and wisdom. Whether through a quick-witted reply, a deeply thought-out response, or as the voice of reason, Dr. Wood's wise counsel has impacted many within the PAACS family and will be missed immensely. We look forward to Dr. Wood's ongoing engagement even if much less formally than it has been for the past 10 years.

In September of 2021, PAACS will welcome Dr. John "Tarp" Tarpley as our next Academic Dean. Dr. Tarpley comes to PAACS directly from Botswana, where he spent the last 2.5 years setting up the first surgical residency in the country of Botswana. Previously, Dr. Tarpley served in both Rwanda and Kenya (PAACS Kijabe Hospital site). Before his second time in Africa, Tarpley served as the Program Director for the Vanderbilt University General Surgery Residency from 2001-2014 while also serving as the Chief of Surgery at the Veteran Administrations Hospital associated with Vanderbilt. Tarpley's extensive global surgical work includes 15 years working as a missionary surgeon in Ogbomosh, Nigeria, at the Baptist Medical Center, directing the House Staff Training Program. During that time, he served as a lecturer at University Centre Hospital, Ibadan. We are thankful for Dr. Tarpley's willingness to serve as the next PAACS Academic Dean. Welcome aboard, Tarp!

## PAACS SAYS THANK YOU AND FAREWELL TO DR. HANNA

By Keir Thelander

After greater than 6 years of service at Harpur Memorial Hospital in Menouf, Egypt, Dr. Sherif Hanna and his wife, Mary-Lou, will be transitioning back home to Canada. Dr. Hanna served initially as the Assistant Program Director to Dr. David Thompson and over the last few years Dr. Hanna has been the PAACS Program Director as he fulfilled other hospital responsibilities, such as Chief of Surgery. Under

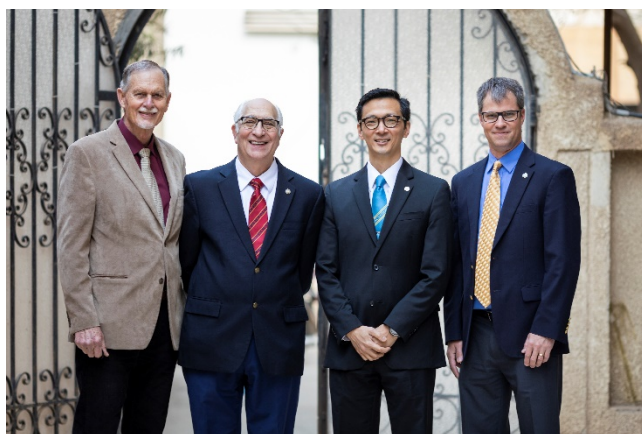


Dr. Hanna's leadership, PAACS trainees were the beneficiaries of a robust academic program as well as a growing clinical experience.

Dr. Thompson and PAACS Executive Vice President, Dr. Keir Thelander, had the privilege of participating in a farewell ceremony for the Hanna's on March 31st. Many appreciations were expressed from hospital leaders as well as from Dr. Thelander, who thanked the Hanna's for their dedicated service and example. They noted the legacy they will leave at Harpur through the residents that have been trained. Dr. Thompson shared about the Hanna's move from Canada to Egypt and how they integrated into the work of the hospital, taking the opportunity to reference the similarities to certain Biblical events. The ceremony concluded with a collage of videoed thank-yous to the Hannas which were contributed by previous missionaries, staff, and current staff and colleagues. Undoubtedly, the Hannas are well loved, appreciated, and will be missed.

This past week, the Anglican Diocese of Egypt, led by Bishop Mouneer Hanna, also had a special celebration to honor the Hannas. Louis Dumas, the Canadian ambassador to Egypt, also attended and spoke highly of Dr. Hanna's seven-year contribution to Egypt and the training of surgeons.

Over the last few months, Dr. Hanna has transitioned his leadership responsibilities to Dr. Paul Lim and Dr. Shady Fayek. No doubt a void will be felt at Harpur Memorial Hospital after the Hanna's departure this May. Please carry them in prayer as they reintegrate to Canada and also please pray for the Lord to fill the void they have left at Harpur Memorial Hospital. Dr. Hanna can be reached at [dr.sherif.hanna@gmail.com](mailto:dr.sherif.hanna@gmail.com)



(L to R): David Thompson, Sherif Hanna, Paul Lim and Keir Thelander



Sherif and Mary Lou Hanna surrounded by the entire PAACS team at Harpur Memorial Hospital

## COVID RESCHEDULING FINALLY OVERCOME IN SODDO

By Tim Love

While the past 14 months of COVID at Soddo Christian Hospital have been replete with grief, disappointments, and rescheduled events, the folks here are grateful to finally have been able to hold a number of crucial events that punctuate the start of a new year in PAACS programs across Africa. Our COSECSA-mandated Basic Surgical Skills course, White Coat ceremony, and the annual spiritual retreat were each rescheduled no less than three times each, largely due to COVID positivity among residents. Praise the Lord with us for the complete recovery of all our residents who contracted COVID.

Many of you who read this PAACS Bulletin will have either read about, attended, or even helped lead a PAACS White Coat Ceremony in the past, undoubtedly left with the same impressions of joy and gratitude that

come from seeing the Lord bring new residents into the PAACS fold. On Wednesday morning, April 7<sup>th</sup>, we held our White Coat Ceremony during the usual weekly chapel service which allows the whole hospital staff and patients to be present. We used this time to rehearse God's goodness to PAACS and discuss the marks of a PAACS surgeon.

Having recently read the new book "Training God's Surgeons for Africa: The Story of the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons" by Drs. David Thompson and Bruce Steffes, assistant program director, Tim Love, spoke in detail about the history of PAACS. Recounting several stories of how PAACS developed across Africa and in Soddo in particular, he encouraged those in attendance that the Lord is able to take what we perceive as unexpected, undesirable events in our lives and use them to accomplish his good and perfect purposes. Indeed, with the LORD, all things are possible (Matt. 19:26).

---

*Quick plug from Tim: Please do get a copy of the new PAACS book. It is a well-written account of what the Lord has been doing in PAACS over the past 25 years. I have personally been following PAACS and receiving these Bulletins since 2005, as had numerous others in the crowd at the White Coat Ceremony. Still, I received numerous comments that "I had never heard at least 50% of the things you covered about PAACS. I need to get that book!"*

---



After discussing some of the history of PAACS, we moved on to talk about the marks of a PAACS surgeon. Here in Ethiopia, you can find nearly anybody wearing a "white coat" to cover their clothes, whether that be a street sweeper, the local butcher, or your surgeon. Furthermore, it seems that the white coat has come under attack by our friends and colleagues in the Infectious Disease department who want us to at least be "naked below the elbow", if not completely discard the wretched fomite altogether. The white coat is not terribly distinctive here, and perhaps even becoming less so.

So, what are the marks of a PAACS surgeon if it's not the white coat? (with the nice little PAACS patch of course!) As we usually do at this ceremony, we read the passage of Christ washing the feet of his disciples at supper (John 13:1-17). Again, struck by this unbelievable act, we asserted that the marks of a PAACS surgeon are **humility** and **servanthood**. If we are indeed to follow in the footsteps of Christ and do just as he has done (v. 15), then we ought to be washing one another's feet. This task typically reserved for non-Jewish



slaves in the time of Christ, is a way that we ought to demonstrate our love for and desire to serve one another. I am in the habit of saying that, “Any surgeon who isn’t struggling with their pride probably ought to be.” Indeed, it seems that surgical training can often be as good at teaching us arrogance as it is teaching us how to throw stitches.



Our prayer as we celebrated this ceremony once again, was that the Lord would remind us of his good and perfect plan for our lives as we seek to serve him, and that through the inner working of the Holy Spirit, we would be known for our humility and love of serving one another.

## PAACS SODDO – SALINE PROCESS TRAINING & SPIRITUAL RETREAT

By Tim Nunn

Following COVID vaccinations for all which were given 3 weeks before, we travelled to the beautiful SIM Babogaya resort for the combined PAACS Ethiopia retreat. We want to thank SIM Ethiopia for awarding us an all-expenses grant for this retreat, and SIM medical team trainers, Drs Rachel Nunn and Mark Topazian for being our very capable and experienced Saline Trainer Faculty.



The Saline Process Training is a 10-hour interactive course in healthcare evangelism, developed by IHS Global and approved by the International Christian Medical and Dental Association. The course is split into 5 sections. The elements are as follows: The importance of faith in healthcare; the opportunities and barriers to sharing faith in healthcare settings; what our part as Christians in health should be; equipping with tools for service; and personal and corporate reflection on 'where do we go from here?'

Intentionally inter-denominational and patient-focused, the Saline Process training gives the health care mission worker multiple skills to share their faith with permission, sensitivity, and respect. Staying alert to the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of our patients is emphasized, as is partnering with patients in their own journey of faith.

Course feedback was overwhelmingly positive and some on-going feedback is expected. We hope that within the group, there will be some future Ethiopian Saline trainers for the future!

*[Editor's note: PAACS has received a grant to permit this program to be rolled out to all PAACS training sites and program trainers will be trained so that it can self-propagate.]*

### Spiritual Retreat

There was plenty of free time for 'messaging around in boats' on the volcanic lake and an annual Residents vs Faculty game of dodge-ball was initiated. Faculty won convincingly! Many new friendships were made, and the children enjoyed the program and games organized for them.

I would personally like to thank Dr. Tim Love and his wife, Laura, for all their hard work in helping to set up this fun Spiritual Retreat.

## NEWS SHORTS

- **PAACS Resident Wins COSECSA Award:** The College of East, Central and South Africa (COSECSA) has awarded to Tenwek PAACS graduate, Fridah Bosire Orwa, the Gerald O'Sullivan medal. It is awarded every year to the Fellow who graduates top of the class and incorporates their score from both the junior and senior level exams. Fridah was announced last month in the PAACS Bulletin as the top scorer for the FCS senior level exams. The medal is named in honor of the former President of RCSI, Professor Gerald (Gerry) O'Sullivan, who along with Professor Krikor Erzingatsian, set up the partnership between RCSI (Royal College of Surgeons – Ireland) and COSECSA in 2007. This partnership aims to help train and retain surgeons in sub-Saharan Africa, and make better surgery accessible to more patients.



The partnership is funded by the Irish people, through Irish Aid, and is coordinated by RCSI. The medal has been awarded every year since 2012. PAACS residents have won it 5 times (out of the 10 years).

- **Record Number of PAACS Applicants:** Amidst the challenges of a global pandemic, there are still many African doctors seeking surgical education and discipleship. A decade ago, PAACS received applications essentially equal in number as the available training spots. So far in 2021, PAACS has received over 295 applications for training to begin in January 2022. The exact number of slots to be filled is still to be determined, with possibly as few as 26 or as many as 38; in any case, we are thankful for the large number of applicants. The demand for PAACS training is high and speaks both to the quality of the individual programs as well as to the advocacy and reputation of our graduates and current residents. This year's applicants are from 24 countries compared to 21 last year. They come from

diverse backgrounds, experiences and medical schools. The initial application deadline was April 15, with the second part of the application due May 15. Interviews will be organized by program after that May 15 date, and they will submit a ranked list to PAACS administration by mid-June. May the Lord guide and direct! Pray with us for the Program Directors and other PAACS leaders and we seek to listen to the Lord during this selection process.

- **PAACS Annual Exams:** In preparation for the PAACS general surgery annual in-service exams to be held June 4-6 (varying by location), the development of 200 item multiple choice exams for the junior and senior levels is nearing completion. In order to ensure validity of the exam, they are constructed to a carefully designed blueprint and questions are selected and vetted by a team of examiners. This year, Carl Haisch, Steve Doane, Bruce Steffes and Keir Thelander are working on the project.

A remediation exam is scheduled for July 23 – 25 for those who do not successfully score high enough. The specialty programs have their own annual in-service exams and the orthopedic residents have recently completed theirs.

Your prayers for the general surgery residents would be appreciated as they study.

- **PAACS Residents' Day of Prayer:** A new quarterly prayer call, specifically for PAACS residents, has been launched by the PAACS Administrative Leadership Team. PAACS realizes that these men and women have been called by God to serve in the under-resourced areas of Africa to be vessels and instruments for His glory. It is important to help them reach their potential and God given destiny. As such, praying for these residents and their families is critical.

Chief Executive Officer, Susan Koshy, Executive Vice President, Dr. Keir Thelander, and Spiritual Dean, Dr. Ed Searce have met twice by Zoom, in January and in April, to pray with and over these residents and their personal and specific needs. Other PAACS staff and Board members were present and joined in praying for the residents.

PAACS is a praying organization, and the importance of upholding our residents in prayer is of paramount importance. It is our desire that these surgical residents succeed and fulfill God's plans for their lives to touch the multitudes for God's kingdom. Many of these residents face various difficulties and trials during the course of their training. It is important as leaders of this ministry that we surround them in prayer and uphold them before God's throne. We are confident that God hears and will answer these prayers to strengthen our residents to walk in His will with excellence.

The next resident prayer call will take place in July, and all PAACS residents are invited to participate. Please join us in praying for these men and women who seek to surrender their lives for God's purposes and glory.

- **Ebola in Africa:** Assuming no new positive cases, DRC will reach its 42-day Ebola free mark on May 3. There are 2 confirmed cases currently in Guinea.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **Anesthesia Help Needed at Malamulo Adventist Hospital:** Malamulo Adventist Hospital in Malawi has lost anesthesia services and is down to one provider. If any anesthesia professionals (including CRNAs) can assist on a short- or long-terms basis, they would much appreciate the help. Please contact Dr. Kasumba Moses at [mkasumba78@gmail.com](mailto:mkasumba78@gmail.com).

- **Short-term and Long-term Surgeons Needed at SIM-Galmi:** Beginning in April when Katherine Shafer goes on home assignment, there will be a critical need for general surgeons at SIM-Galmi. The faculty there will consist only of Yakoubou Sanoussi (GS) and Nathan Peterson (ENT, Head and Neck). Please contact World Medical Mission or Yakoubou Sanoussi at [Yakoubou.Sanoussi@sim.org](mailto:Yakoubou.Sanoussi@sim.org)
- **Short-term and Long-term Surgeons Needed at Bongolo:** The Bongolo Hospital general surgery residency program needs a general surgeon who is able to serve under a sending agency for at least 2 years starting in 2021. Please contact [bongolopd@gmail.com](mailto:bongolopd@gmail.com) if you are interested and able to serve in that time frame.
- **Short-term and Long-term Surgeons Needed at Harpur:** The PAACS program at Harpur Memorial Hospital in Menouf, Egypt needs a General Surgeon for long term (preferably) or short term (several months) service starting in April 2021. For further information please contact Dr. Paul Lim via email at [lifenlim@pm.me](mailto:lifenlim@pm.me)
- **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary PAACS Logo-wear Available:** If you would like to commemorate the 25th anniversary of PAACS this year, you can find a variety of apparel available for purchase in our online store. <https://merch.undergroundshirts.com/collections/paacs-25th-birthday>

Here, you can find polo shirts, ¼ zip sweatshirts, and long sleeve shirts with a special 25th anniversary logo. All are a unisex cut and available in multiple colors and sizes S – 3XL. They are priced from \$17 – \$30 plus S/H. You can order at any time and your items will be ready to ship directly to you approximately 48 hours after placing your order.

Shipping is ONLY available within the United States.



- **Mark Your Calendar**
  - **PAACS In-service Exams:** Depending on the training program, the junior and senior written exams will be given June 4-6.
  - **WACS Conference in June:** The West African College of Surgeons plans to hold their 61st Annual Scientific Conference in Cotonou, Benin Republic. June 14 - June 17. The venue will be the Palais de Congres in Cotonou. Please see website for updates: <https://www.wacsoac.org/>



- **Fall 2021 Board of Directors Meeting** will be held as an in-person meeting on October 15-16, 2021, in Chicago. We plan to hold the preliminary council and committee meetings on Zoom ahead of time.
- **PAACS Basic Science Conference** is tentatively scheduled October 18 – 28, 2021 at the Brackenhurst International Conference Center in Limuru, Kenya. It is primarily designed for attendance by first- and second-year residents and some program faculty. Details will be forthcoming.
- **CMDA-CMDE conferences:** The Continued Medical and Dental Education Commission of the Christian Medical and Dental Associations is planning to have a virtual continuing medical education session on October 23, 2021 and an in-person conference to be held in Marathon Greece April 4 – 14, 2022. The 2020 and 2021 in-person conferences were cancelled because of the pandemic. Only candidates for CME, their spouses and children over 16 years of age will be invited to attend the Greece conference, but they must be able to prove a full vaccination against Covid. Further information will be forthcoming.
- **PAACS Faculty Development** – the date in June 2022 have not been set. It is hoped that it will be held at Brackenhurst International Conference Centre.

## PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Praise the Lord that the PAACS board meeting on April 23 went well.
- Pray for the residents as they study for the PAACS in-service exam to be given the first weekend of June.
- Please pray for the ongoing selection process for new residents to start in January of 2022.
- Peace and stability in the PAACS countries. Pray especially for the ongoing tribal unrest in Ethiopia and the recurrent civil unrest in Cameroon.
- Pray for the Hannas as they begin their trip home and their retirement. Pray for Dr. Paul Lim and the rest of the Harpur-PAACS program as they make the transition.
- Pray for the continued rollout of the Saline Process throughout all the PAACS training sites.
- Pray for those programs who have seen a rise in Covid cases lately, including Soddo, the Kenyan programs, Arusha, Harpur and others.
- Pray that PAACS will glorify God and be used to impact Africa for His Kingdom. Plead that many lives will be saved through surgery and many people will come to know the love of Jesus.
- Pray for wisdom regarding the planning and preparation for the possible Brackenhurst PAACS Basic Science Course the last 2 weeks of October. Additionally, for a possible Brackenhurst PAACS Basic Science Course next year (2022) transitioning to an all 1<sup>st</sup> year conference.
- Pray for the new program in neurosurgery which has started at Tenwek. Pray for Dr. Copeland and for the new trainees.
- Pray for PAACS graduates that are serving God's people. Pray for God's grace, protection, provision, strength, and blessings to cover the PAACS graduates.

- Pray for approval from the government of Kenya for the anesthesia, plastics, ob/gyn, and surgical endoscopy programs.
- Thank the Lord for the approval of PAACS training to begin at HVMM in Madagascar and NMH in Malawi.
- Pray for wisdom and removal of barriers to begin training in Burundi, Malawi, Madagascar and Togo.
- Pray that God will make it possible soon for the short-term missionaries to return to service in the mission hospitals.
- Pray for all the PAACS faculty members and the hospitals – for personal health and safety and for financial viability of the charity hospitals in this tough time.
- Pray that God will bring His chosen long and short-term missionary and national surgeons to help train African residents in the PAACS training programs. Pray that the critical manpower needs will be met and that the restrictions for short-term travel will soon go away.
- Pray for the surgical help needed at Bongolo Hospital during the O’Connors furlough beginning of June to August.
- Pray for Galmi Hospital which has an immense need for General Surgery help beginning April of this year for 3-6 months. Pray also for the needs at Bongolo Hospital, Harpur and Kijabe Hospital.
- Please pray for the anesthesia needs at Malamulo Adventist Hospital.
- Pray for the Tenwek Orthopedic training program which has a great need for additional faculty members starting in August 2021.
- Pray for those faculty members on home assignment – the Birds and soon the Loves – for their rest, for the times of medical work and for the meeting with their supporters and raising funds. Pray for the faculty members that must cover their absence.
- Pray for Dr. Rich Davis and family as they prepare to return to Kijabe Hospital later this year.
- Pray for the Ganey family who have returned to the US to handle some health issues. Pray for healing.
- Pray for the Love family as they begin furlough in the coming week, which is after their first term that included an evacuation among other stressors.
- Pray for those surgeons who are planning to join PAACS in the next few years – as they complete their residencies or fellowships, as they find a sending agency, as they raise the necessary money and as they prepare for the major cultural shifts.

Editor: Bruce C. Steffes, MD