



The PAACS Bulletin

Monthly Newsletter • Issue 266 • September 2026



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.

VISION

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

IN THIS ISSUE

- From the Desk of the CEO:
A Season of Connection and Celebration
- Wake Forest Plastic Surgery Team Serves at HBB:
Four Days of Care, Training, and Compassion
- AIC Kijabe Anesthesiology at 2026 KSA:
Sharing Knowledge and Advancing Education
- Joint ZSOG-ECSACOG Annual Scientific Conference
and Graduation in Harare, Zimbabwe
- Dr. James Brown Returns to Mbingo:
The Next Generation is Ready to Lead
- Dr. Alliance Niyukuri Returns to Bongolo:
Giving Back Where His Training Began
- Learning to Be Transformed:
A Devotional on Renewing Our Minds
- Dr. Richard Hart Retires from Loma Linda University:
A Legacy of Service and Partnership
- PAACS News
 - PAACS 2026 Fall Conference
 - 2027 Loma Linda University Global Surgery Fellowship
 - From Surgical Deserts to Centers of Hope:
A Webinar with Dr. Bill Rhodes
 - PAACS Stores
- Prayer Requests/Praises
- Articles on Surgery



FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO: A SEASON OF CONNECTION AND CELEBRATION

Susan Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer

Dear PAACS Family,

September has been a full and encouraging month for the Pan-African Academy of Christian Surgeons (PAACS) as we have connected with friends and partners across the United States and prepared for an important season ahead. We are grateful for the relationships God has built around this ministry and the many people He uses to strengthen and sustain the work of training and discipling African surgeons and related specialists.

One special part of this month has been welcoming Dr. Marvin Wekesa to the United States through the 2026 PAACS Travel Fellowship. Dr. Wekesa is a 2020 PAACS Orthopaedic Surgery graduate from Tenwek Hospital. He now serves as Head of the Orthopedics Department at Isiolo County Referral Hospital in Kenya. During his time here, Dr. Wekesa is participating in orthopaedic education while traveling across the country to speak about PAACS and how God is working through surgical training and discipleship in Africa.

His Travel Fellowship includes stops in:

- Avon, Ohio | September 6th–12th
- Atlanta and Columbus, Georgia | September 14th–19th
- Dallas and Houston, Texas | September 21st–25th
- Johnson City, Tennessee | September 28th–October 2nd
- Phoenix, Arizona | October 3rd–7th
- Chicago, Illinois | October 8th–10th



FROM THE DESK OF THE CEO: A SEASON OF CONNECTION AND CELEBRATION (CONT'D)

Through dinners, presentations, and educational opportunities, he is connecting with physicians, churches, donors, and friends of PAACS along the way. I was grateful to spend a week with Dr. Wekesa in Georgia, where we spoke at various events and connected with friends and supporters of PAACS. We thank all who have welcomed him and helped others hear firsthand about the impact of this ministry.

On September 28th, we also gathered during the American College of Surgeons Clinical Congress in Washington, DC, for our PAACS Reception. We are thankful to reconnect with longtime friends, build new relationships, and share the mission and vision of PAACS.

We are now just weeks away from our 2026 PAACS Fall Conference, October 8th–10th, in Des Plaines, Illinois, where we will celebrate 30 years of God's faithfulness to PAACS. This year, 133 people have registered to join us in person. Although in-person registration has closed, [virtual registration remains available](#). We look forward to gathering under the theme, "Great Is His Faithfulness: Celebrating 30 Years of PAACS—Remembering His Goodness. Stepping Into His Future."

Thank you for praying, giving, serving, and faithfully walking alongside PAACS. As we come together in October and look toward the future, may we continue to remember His goodness, trust His provision, and give Him the glory for all He has done.

Great is His faithfulness!

Blessings,



Susan A. Koshy, JD, MPH
Chief Executive Officer





WAKE FOREST PLASTIC SURGERY TEAM SERVES AT HBB: FOUR DAYS OF CARE, TRAINING, AND COMPASSION

Jack E. Kehl III, MD, FACS, FCS (ECSA)
Program Director, General Surgery
Hôpital Baptiste Biblique, Togo

L'Hôpital Baptiste Biblique (HBB) welcomed the Plastic Surgery Department from Wake Forest University to Togo for a four-day surgical campaign. The specialty team, led by Dr. Lisa David and Dr. Kyle Robinson, provided care for patients with cleft palates, facial tumors, burn contractures, limb deformities, and acute traumatic injuries.



During the four-day visit, 26 patients received surgical care, while PAACS residents gained unique learning opportunities and exposure to new surgical procedures. All the patients and their families also heard the Gospel and experienced the love and compassion of Christ.

We are very thankful for God's provision through the Wake Forest University team and look forward to welcoming them back next year.





AIC KIJABE ANESTHESIOLOGY AT 2026 KSA: SHARING KNOWLEDGE AND ADVANCING EDUCATION

Matthew Kynes, MD
Program Director, Anesthesiology
AIC Kijabe Hospital, Kenya

AIC Kijabe Hospital PAACS Anesthesiology residents and faculty members had a strong presence at the 2026 Kenya Society of Anesthesiologists (KSA) meeting, held August 19th–21st in Mombasa. We are grateful for the preparation and poise of all the presenters and organizers for this meeting!

KSA Scientific Committee

Dr. Eunice Kageha

Presentations

Paediatric Airway Emergencies: Preventing the 'Can't Intubate, Can't Ventilate' Scenario

By Dr. Cynthia Achola

More Than the ASA Score: Identifying the High-risk Surgical Patient

By Dr. Matt Kynes

Practical Intraoperative Management of Raised ICP

Dr. Rebecca Dufe

Point-of-Care Ultrasound (POCUS) in Anaesthesia Practice: Expanding the Role of the Anaesthesiologist in Perioperative Diagnosis and Patient Safety

Dr. Eunice Kageha

Role of Simulation in Crisis Management: Preparing Teams Before Patients Need Them

Dr. Cynthia Achola

Beyond Tick Boxes: Modernizing the WHO Surgical Safety Checklist — From Compliance to Culture in Perioperative Safety

Dr. Betelhem Hailu Belda

Poster Presentations

Removal of Intra-Abdominal Lithopedion Two Years After Retained Twin Following Uterine Rupture: A Case Report

Dr. Etienne Mastaki

Poster Judging

Dr. Matt Kynes





JOINT ZSOG-ECSACOG ANNUAL SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE AND GRADUATION IN HARARE, ZIMBABWE

Nate Ross, MD
Faculty Member, General Surgery
Soddo Christian Hospital, Ethiopia

In August, the PAACS OB/GYN programs at both Kijabe Hospital and Tenwek Hospital were represented at the recent East, Central and Southern Africa College of Obstetrics and Gynecology (ECSACOG) annual scientific conference as well as inaugural graduation. With about 200 attendees and presentations from the Ministry of Health of Zimbabwe, the first 19 graduates of ECSACOG were issued certificates of competence, a momentous occasion for this young college.

Dr. Alemu Arja from the PAACS program at Tenwek was chosen to give a formal case report of a combined obstetric and cardiovascular surgery procedure done for the first time in Africa. His presentation garnered lots of questions and piqued the attention of the attendees.

Dr. Lilian Mameti from the PAACS program at Kijabe, Program Director and ECSACOG Country Representative for Kenya, was also present and involved in meetings with members of the ECSACOG leadership throughout the event.

Dr. Keir Thelander and Dr. Nate Ross from Soddo also attended and met with ECSACOG members to discuss ways PAACS and ECSACOG could collaborate, including the possibility of starting a PAACS program in Soddo in conjunction with ECSACOG.

We are excited to have official ECSACOG graduates in the near future and for what God has in store for both PAACS and ECSACOG.





DR. JAMES BROWN RETURNS TO MBINGO: THE NEXT GENERATION IS READY TO LEAD

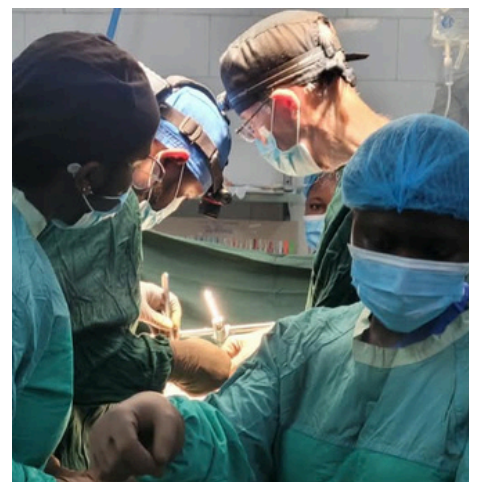
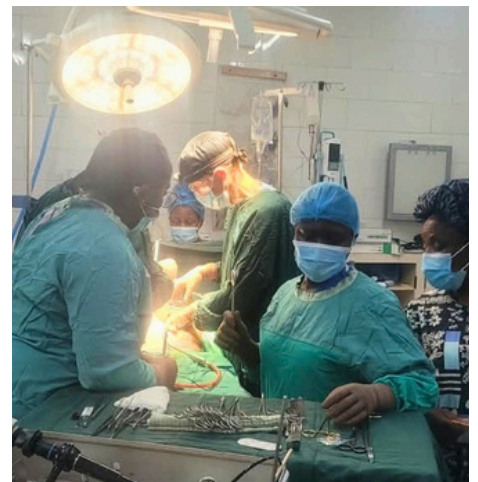
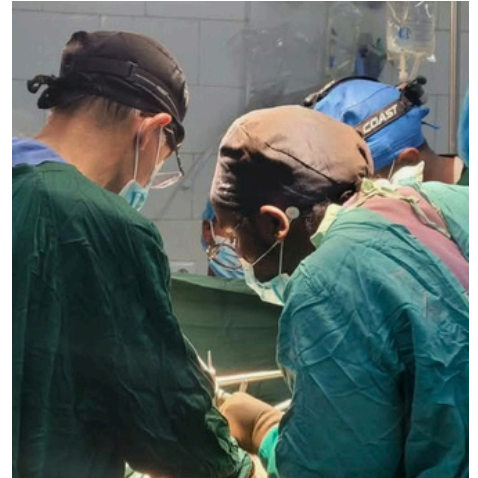
James Brown, MD, FACS
Former Program Director, General Surgery
Mbingo Baptist Hospital, Cameroon

My wife and I served at Mbingo Baptist Hospital in Cameroon for almost twelve years, from 2011 to 2023. For most of that time, I served as the PAACS Surgical Program Director. During the last two weeks in August, we made our third return visit to Mbingo since we came home three and a half years ago.

Every retired missionary (if that is what I am) prays that their work will not only continue but progress far beyond what they left behind. God is answering that prayer for me. I found a thriving hospital with a strong commitment to graduate medical education through the PAACS General Surgery Program, the Christian Internal Medicine Specialist (CIMS) Program, and the PAACS Head and Neck Surgical Fellowship. Each program maintains a rigorous academic schedule while providing highly specialized patient care otherwise unavailable to most Cameroonians. This training takes place in the context of Christian discipleship among trainees and the proclamation of the gospel through the platform that high-quality surgical and related specialty care provides.

From the beginning, one of PAACS's great strengths has been its model of partnering with African faith-based hospitals to provide postgraduate surgical education in places of enormous surgical need. A secondary goal for me was to see nationals as program directors and faculty. Today, all PAACS General Surgery faculty members at Mbingo are graduates of PAACS surgical or related specialty programs. Led by PAACS Surgical Program Director Dr. Chukwuemeka Nwegbu, they are carrying the work forward with excellence.

Ongoing security concerns in the region, however, have made it difficult for Mbingo to recruit new faculty members and have limited visits from faculty at outside institutions. While the current faculty provide strong leadership, outside perspectives remain valuable to any training program, bringing new ideas, approaches, and opportunities for collaboration that are essential to the program's long-term health.



DR. JAMES BROWN RETURNS TO MBINGO: THE NEXT GENERATION IS READY TO LEAD (CONT'D)

Although the intense fighting and military campaigns have passed, the region still experiences periodic lockdowns and unpredictable flare-ups of hostilities. These challenges rarely affect the hospital's day-to-day work, but some patients, particularly those traveling from francophone regions, remain hesitant to make the journey to Mbingo. Patient volume and case diversity have not fully returned to what they were before the Anglophone crisis.

Yet through years of conflict, Mbingo Baptist Hospital has never closed its doors to patient care for even one day. The work goes on, and the training programs have persevered.

Mbingo remains especially strong in medical and surgical oncology, trauma, complicated wound care, pediatric surgery, and head and neck surgery, while also serving as a referral center for patients with complications referred from other facilities. The hospital has advanced specialty operating rooms, an ICU, stable hydroelectric power, an oxygen-generating plant, a CT scanner, on-site histopathology, and laparoscopy, with a linear accelerator for radiation therapy coming soon. Together, these resources and clinical capabilities make Mbingo a valuable setting for visiting surgical specialists and resident rotations.

In a recent list of prayer requests for Mbingo, Dr. Nwegbu asked for new faculty members, unity among residents, faculty members, and their families, security on the roads, and healthy relationships with the hospital administration and the Cameroon Baptist Convention Director of Health Services.

God has blessed and preserved Mbingo through countless difficulties. It continues to shine a light in a dark place, fulfilling PAACS's vision of living out the gospel and ministering to the sick.





DR. ALLIANCE NIYUKURI RETURNS TO BONGOLO: GIVING BACK WHERE HIS TRAINING BEGAN

David Schaeffer, MD
Assistant Program Director, General Surgery
Bongolo Hospital, Gabon

During the week of September 6th, Bongolo Hospital had the joy of welcoming back Dr. Alliance Niyukuri, a Burundian pediatric surgeon who completed his PAACS General Surgery training at Bongolo in 2018. His 10-day visit was filled with heartwarming reunions, meaningful connections with current residents, and opportunities to provide pediatric surgical care.

One particularly memorable case involved a 6-year-old boy who had suffered from severe constipation for the past two to three years. During surgery, Dr. Niyukuri discovered a rare cecal duplication cyst that was causing a stricture of the ascending colon. We rejoice in the healing this young boy experienced and in the many other lives touched during Dr. Niyukuri's time at Bongolo.

The visit also provided valuable learning opportunities for residents and faculty members and was an encouraging reminder of the lasting relationships between PAACS graduates and the programs where they trained. As Dr. Niyukuri returned to the place where he once trained, he was able to give back by sharing his experience, skills, and knowledge with those following in his footsteps.





LEARNING TO BE TRANSFORMED: A DEVOTIONAL ON RENEWING OUR MINDS

Christopher Moir, MD
Academic Dean

What is learning?

Two of the greatest lessons I have learned are from Romans 8 and 12. Nothing will ever separate us from the love of God, and lesson 2, why conform to a world that will never love us back? We have a standing offer from the Creator of love to conform ourselves to God and be transformed by the renewing of our minds.

So, what is learning? Experience-dependent neuroplasticity, of course. What? Well, in PAACS it is experience-directed neuroplasticity. Ah...right. And, what is the relevance?

Maggie Tarpley sent an article about a double standard we physicians display by dressing better for our colleagues at annual meetings than for our patients in the clinic.

The author suggested we study Mayo Gear: jacket and tie, business professional dress.

We knew it as the Mayo "uniform."

And it goes way back.

There is an apocryphal story that Dr. Mayo asked a colleague who was not wearing a tie, "Do you work at my Clinic?" Dr. Open-Shirt said, "Yes." To which Dr. Mayo replied, "Not anymore."

Many colorful versions of such stories exist, but this has been our own cautionary tale.

Which I flouted. I have been a habitual heretic. Wearing scrubs to clinic believing, as the only pediatric surgeon still standing, the greater good was the most efficient way back to the operating room.



Not so. It ended when an eight-year-old called out my blasphemy to the Mayo name after I recommended hernia surgery.

She disagreed. Vehemently. "Just look at his shoes!" she sneered, pointing at my surgical trophy standard of scuffed, pounded, shambling good luck.

And she was right. They were appalling. I thought I had worn the respected uniform of the seasoned surgeon.

She saw none of that. In her eyes, Mr. Shoddy Shoes was no surgeon for her.

LEARNING TO BE TRANSFORMED: A DEVOTIONAL ON RENEWING OUR MINDS (CONT'D)

Right then, wisdom hidden from us so-called high and mighty was revealed through a child. (Luke 10:21)

In my institution, with its dress code, its context of caring for vulnerable patients, and its “patient comes first” ethos, I had repeatedly shown disrespect.

The lessons were obvious:

- Never forget why we are here.

- Never forget who we are facing.

- Never think your problems are bigger.

But we think and forget all the time. Learning is not unidirectional, much as we would like it to be. There is a lot of pruning going on in that neuroplastic orchard of our brains.

Hermann Ebbinghaus says we forget all the time. Dr. Ted Watts brought this up at last year’s Senior Trainee Conference (STC). Without spaced repetition, without retrieving and reconsolidating memory, without further directed experience into our neuroplastic brains, we forget. We get distracted. We don’t think. We retreat to the Large Language Model (LLM) of the world that has been ingrained in our spongy brains before we could speak.

All true and concerning, but leaving my operating room shoes where they belong was not to please some snotvik eight-year-old. Instead, it remains to follow God’s wisdom in relationships. I would relearn a core Christian principle explicated and exhorted in Romans.

Yes, the Holy Spirit works in us. Yes, we have received grace and yes, Romans 8 is profoundly beautiful. But without the work of Romans 12, I would have continued down a dark path of insulting petulant eight-year-olds.

What is learning?

It is excitement on the first day of school and the chore of studying for exams. It is that chilling thrill of a first incision and then doing it over and over at 3 AM. It is loving so deeply you will sacrifice for it.

Bottom line? Holiness is neither automatic nor inevitable. That is from John Stott. He also summarized the progression in Romans as belief leading to behavior, doctrine to duty, and creed to conduct. Chapter 8 will always “drive me out of that dark little dungeon of my own ego” (Malcolm Muggeridge) to the Chapter 12’s joy of a renewed mind.

Daily spaced repetition. Experience-dependent neuroplasticity. The Holy Spirit, through our ever-changing brain, changing us all. We will know what is good, pleasing, and holy (Romans 12:2). We will know true joy.



DR. RICHARD HART RETIRES FROM LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY: A LEGACY OF SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIP

Mark Reeves, MD
Loma Linda University Representative
Board of Directors

Richard Hart, MD, DrPH, retired this summer after dedicating more than 60 years of his life to Loma Linda University (LLU). He first came to LLU as a student in 1966, and later served the University in many capacities, including the Chair of the Department of Preventive Medicine in the School of Medicine, the Dean of the School of Public Health, the Chancellor of the University, and then for the last 18 years as President and CEO of Loma Linda University Health.

During his tenure as President, Dr. Hart has overseen the vast expansion of the institution, including the 2021 opening of the \$2.1 billion flagship academic medical center in the center of campus. LLU now consists of 6 hospitals, 8 schools, 12 institutes, more than 1200 physicians, and nearly 20,000 employees. It is located in Southern California, where it has provided Christ-centered care, educated healthcare professionals, and performed world-class research for more than 120 years.

Perhaps more than anything else, Dr. Hart's tenure has been known for its expansion of the University as the healthcare flagship of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, known worldwide for its work in education and healthcare. Indeed, Dr. Hart founded Adventist Health International, and continues to serve as its President.

Dr. Hart has always known the importance of international healthcare service, starting with his early days as a missionary in Africa. Therefore, it is not surprising that when David Thompson asked him more than 25 years ago if LLU would help PAACS as it was getting started, Dr. Hart said "yes." Since then, LLU has served as PAACS' academic partner, performing accreditation functions, granting diplomas to PAACS graduates, and conferring Global Faculty appointments to PAACS faculty.

Dr. Hart recently reflected on his original meetings with Dr. Thompson:

"I had never heard of Dave Thompson when this lanky surgeon walked into my office at Loma Linda. As I remember, his first words were 'I am a tired surgeon from Bongolo Hospital in Gabon, and I can't keep going on like this.'" From my own experience in Africa, I immediately understood and sympathized with his plight. Dave shared his own story, his commitment to Africa, and his growing desperation on how to keep up without more help. He laid out his plea that he and a growing group of colleagues needed a respected Christian university to partner with them. They felt this was critical to gain the credibility they needed to start what they then called the Pan-African College of Christian Surgeons. We shook hands and confirmed our shared commitment to Africa.

Though Loma Linda University had extensive experience globally, and especially in Africa, that experience also carried with it some caution.

DR. RICHARD HART RETIRES FROM LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY: A LEGACY OF SERVICE AND PARTNERSHIP (CONT'D)

Would graduates seek to use their new diplomas with Loma Linda's name to seek a license in the USA? Would the American College of Surgeons question what we were doing? What would this new affiliation cost us in both time and finances? What word would we use on the diploma to indicate our approval of each hospital and their graduate's expertise? After considerable discussions with university leadership and a final commitment from the Board of Trustees, we were satisfied and agreed to this new partnership."

Thus started a relationship between two organizations that neither Dr. Hart nor Dr. Thompson could have originally envisioned.

This year, as Dr. Hart retires from Loma Linda University, PAACS celebrates its 30th year of training and discipling Christian surgeons. Dr. Hart will share his perspectives on the history of LLU and PAACS on the evening of Thursday, October 8th, during the PAACS 30th anniversary celebration at the 2026 PAACS Fall Conference.



Dr. Hart enjoying a moment with a friend in Zambia

PAACS NEWS

Join the PAACS 2026 Fall Conference

Virtual Attendance
October 9-10, 2026

Celebrate 30 Years with Us—
Wherever You Are

Questions?
Email: peggy.ndlovu@paacs.net

[CLICK HERE TO
REGISTER](#)



FROM SURGICAL DESERTS TO CENTERS OF HOPE

Webinar with
Dr. Bill Rhodes

Join Dr. Bill Rhodes, PAACS Program Director at AIC Kapsowar Hospital in Kenya, and the 2021 African Mission Healthcare Gerson L'Chaim Prize recipient, as he shares the progress being made to train and disciple African surgeons to serve. He will also discuss how investing in their training can help transform access to surgical care for an entire community.



Hosted by African Mission Healthcare
Co-Founder Rabbi Erica Gerson

Saturday, October 3rd, 2026
9:00 AM Pacific | 10:00 AM Mountain
11:00 AM Central | 12:00 PM Eastern

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR ZOOM WEBINAR](#)

2027 LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY GLOBAL SURGERY FELLOWSHIP

Loma Linda University Health is accepting applications for its one-year Global Surgery Fellowship, beginning August 1st, 2027. The fellowship prepares American-trained general surgeons to provide surgical care in low-resource settings and includes training in California and Malawi. Interviews will be held virtually in November 2026.

[CLICK HERE TO
LEARN MORE](#)

Visit the
PAACS STORES

[Print Your Cause](#) – featuring 30th anniversary apparel and scrubs.

[Queensboro](#) – offering a wide range of apparel and accessories.

[Lands' End](#) – providing premium business-casual styles and accessories.

PRAYER & PRAISE

- Pray for God's favor over all PAACS training programs, that they will glorify God and be used to impact Africa for His Kingdom.
- Pray for the 2026 PAACS Fall Conference, October 8th–10th. As we gather to celebrate 30 years of PAACS, pray for meaningful fellowship, encouragement, and learning, and that God would be glorified as we remember His faithfulness and look toward the future.
- Pray for God's wisdom and guidance for the Board of Directors, leadership, and administrative staff as they seek to faithfully lead the PAACS ministry.
- Pray for the Senior Trainee Conference in Kenya starting October 25th.

Each month, we pray for residents by name. Please join us this month by covering these residents in prayer:

- John Blasto Ngili
- Nadine Ndechu Ngamadhile
- Veronicah Wanjiru Kung'u
- Samuel Shabani Magala
- Martha Achieng Awiti
- Melance Kabanyegeye
- Kyobe Emmanuel
- Matthew Kolleh
- Estifanos Bafa Babulo
- Trymore Sithole
- Francis Yamikani Donda
- Hayibor Joela
- Lina Estefania Massique Balane
- Sharon Bonya
- Timothy Worancha



ARTICLES ON SURGERY, OB/GYN, AND ANESTHESIOLOGY

Compiled by Margaret Tarpley

- Beyond the Operation: Building Sustainable Follow-up After Post-Surgical Humanitarian Trips
- Making the House a Home: Cultivating Community in Surgery
- Beyond the Scalpel: Thirty Years of Lessons on Communication, Trust, and Human Connection in Cardiac Surgery
- Carbon Conscious Surgery: Environmental, Economic, and Clinical Outcomes of a Local Anaesthetic Hernia Repair Pathway
- Short or Long Antibiotic Regimens in Orthopedic Infection
- Leadership - An Essential Objective of Professional Development in Surgery
- Applying the Golden Rule to the Golden Hour
- Six rules for doctors using AI
- Advancing Health Equity Along the Surgical Care Pathway: A Scoping Review of Surgical Practice Guidelines
- Civility is the Foundation of Patient Safety in Surgery
- Colonoscopy Surveillance after Polyp Removal
- Prevalence of Burnout Among Practising Anaesthesia Providers: A Systematic Review
- Postoperative Antibiotics After Appendectomy for Acute Appendicitis: No Evidence of Benefit, Even With Intra-abdominal Fluid
- Interpreting Cost-Effectiveness in Low-Carbon Anaesthesia
- Project for Universal Management of Airways: Guidelines for Tracheal Extubation

Read more articles compiled by Margaret Tarpley by clicking here!

PARTNER WITH PAACS



GIVE (U.S.)

GIVE (Canada)

GIVE (UK)

GIVE (Other)

CONNECT

