



## **The Society of Thoracic Surgeons National Database Outcomes Program**

### **Congenital Heart Surgery Database**

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) invites you to join your colleagues in participating in the STS National Database for the collection of Congenital Heart Surgery Database outcomes data. STS is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 5,800 surgeons, researchers, and allied health professionals worldwide dedicated to ensuring the best possible heart, lung, esophageal and thoracic surgical procedures. Founded in 1964, the mission of STS is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research and advocacy.

The STS believes physicians are in the best position to measure clinical performance both accurately and objectively. Since 1989, STS has been dedicated to providing the specialty with a program by which cardiothoracic surgeons report outcomes. This program was expanded in September 2002 to include a stand-alone Congenital Heart Surgery Database. Joining the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database will enhance your practice, the specialty, and –most importantly– the care delivered to your patients. Many third-party entities, major corporate purchasers of health care, health care systems, and government agencies require outcomes monitoring and participation in quality improvement programs. The Congenital Heart Surgery Database fulfills these requirements.

The STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database Task Force, in cooperation with European and Japanese congenital heart surgery leadership, redefined and standardized the nomenclature for congenital heart surgery. The 2010 upgrade of the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database includes new demographic fields facilitating improved long term outcome assessment and linkage to other databases for pediatric cardiology and critical care and a new Anesthesiology component, developed with the Congenital Cardiac Anesthesia Society. This robust tool allows enhanced data collection and continuity of quality assessment and improvement in care of patients with congenital heart disease.

Many unique opportunities and challenges lie ahead for the specialty of congenital heart surgery. The STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database provides the means to prepare both you and the specialty for these challenges. Please take time to become familiar with the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database and recognize the value and importance of becoming a part of this exciting program.

Listed below are examples of how participation in the Congenital Heart Surgery Database can benefit you and your practice.

◆ For your patients, your data will provide:

- Practice-performance assessment as related to the aggregate outcomes of participating surgeon groups
- Analysis of major outcomes and process-of-care measures that affect congenital heart surgery
- Aristotle™ Complexity Scores to evaluate the clinical characteristics of your practice
- Feedback to document quality improvement efforts on the part of your practice
- Data for research projects, including assessment of new technology that can be used to improve patient care and outcomes

- ◆ For your practice, your data will allow you to:
  - Document the quality of care delivered by your practice for interested third-party entities
  - Maintain your own data if data are requested or mandated
  - Identify areas for improvement in quality and efficiencies of care
  - Measure the effect of changes in clinical practice and improve the delivery of congenital heart surgery care
  - Implement a data-driven quality improvement program
  
- ◆ For the specialty, your data may be used in many ways:
  - CMS practice expense evaluation
  - FDA post market device surveillance
  - Local hospital administration resource allocation
  - Resource allocation and identification of selected participants in federally sponsored programs
  - Provider selection and reimbursement allocation by health maintenance organizations and managed care organizations
  - Professional affairs testimony, individual negotiations, and public relations
  
- ◆ The STS National Database provides you, your practice, and your patients with:
  - A standardized format for examining the care of patients undergoing congenital\_heart surgery operations
  - A tool that can be used to target specific areas for clinical practice improvement
  - The ability to obtain an accurate reflection of practice patterns
  - The ability to research the national aggregate data set
  - The opportunity to participate in a national quality improvement effort for congenital heart surgery that has an impact at the local, regional, and national levels

### **Participant benefits**

By agreeing to collect and submit outcomes data to the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database, you will commit to improving the quality of care that your patients receive. The STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database is designed to provide meaningful and useful data to the clinical practitioner.

Duke Clinical Research Institute (DCRI) is the data warehouse and analysis center for the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database. The DCRI team brings to the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database a wealth of experience and knowledge in the area of outcomes management. In addition, because DCRI is an independent, unbiased organization, it lends objectivity and credibility to the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database. On behalf of the STS, DCRI develops participant-specific reports that provide analysis of participant's congenital heart surgery outcomes. These reports benchmark each participating institution's data against aggregate outcomes displayed in both graphic and tabular format. Reports are available to participants in electronic (CD) format.

## Joining the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database

Participation in the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database is voluntary. It is the goal of the STS to make the Congenital Heart Surgery Database the “gold standard” for outcomes reporting and quality improvement in congenital heart surgery. Achievement of this goal requires 100% participation from all surgeons and the hospitals in which they practice in the country. Your investment will improve the quality of care delivered to your patients, and will satisfy your administrative responsibilities for assessing outcomes and quality improvement required by your institution and third party carriers.

The Data Specifications and Data Collection Forms for the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database are available on the STS web site.

- Visit [www.sts.org/datamanager](http://www.sts.org/datamanager).
- Select "Data Collection."

Outlined below are the first four steps required for participation in the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database.

### 1. STS Contact Form

Visit [www.sts.org/participate](http://www.sts.org/participate) and download the Participant Contact Form. Complete and submit the STS Contact Form to Gerry Tarafa, Operations Manager for the STS National Database, as indicated on the form. This form will allow STS to identify pertinent contact information. Once STS receives the completed Contact Form, a Congenital Heart Surgery Database Participation Agreement and Business Associate Contract and Data Use Agreement will be sent to you via e-mail.

### 2. Complete the Participation Agreement

Follow the instructions that are enclosed along with the Participation Agreement. Once completed, please send the original agreement back to STS for counter signature. Within 15 days you will receive a copy of the fully executed agreement for your records.

There is an annual participation fee that varies depending on whether or not the majority of your congenital heart surgeons are STS members. For 2010, the participation fee for the Congenital Heart Surgery Database:

- Majority of Congenital Heart Surgery Database Surgeons STS Members: **\$2,000**
- Majority of Congenital Heart Surgery Database Surgeons Non STS Members: **\$2,500**
- In addition, all participants pay an additional fee of **\$1.00** per patient record harvested.
- In addition, if your anesthesiologists will be participating, there will be an additional annual fee of **\$3000**.

The appropriate fees must be paid in full to the STS before your institution receives outcomes reports from STS.

### 3. Purchase STS Harvest Compliant Software

- Visit [www.sts.org/participate](http://www.sts.org/participate).
- Scroll down to "STS Congenital Heart Surgery Software Vendors."

By following the directions, you will find a list of the commercial vendors that are authorized to supply Harvest Compliant Software to Congenital Heart Surgery Database participants.

We encourage you to research the vendors before purchasing software. Each vendor has a variety of software solutions that can be customized depending on your needs. Once you have purchased software, your vendor will send the STS a Vendor Licensing Form.

#### 4. Contact with DCRI

Once the Participation Agreement is fully executed, you will be eligible to participate in the next Congenital Heart Surgery Database Harvest. To identify the next harvest opportunity, please refer to the STS Web site.

- Visit [www.sts.org/participate](http://www.sts.org/participate).
- Scroll down to "Congenital Heart Surgery Database Harvest Timeline."

Please contact your DCRI Clinical Data Specialist (CDS) for additional harvest information. Your CDS for the Congenital Heart Surgery Database is Leigh Ann Jones. Ms. Jones can be reached at (919) 668-8299.

For more information on the STS Congenital Heart Surgery Database, please visit the STS National Database section of [www.sts.org](http://www.sts.org), or contact Gerry Tarafa at (312) 202-5833 or [gtarafa@sts.org](mailto:gtarafa@sts.org).