

THE SOCIETY OF THORACIC SURGEONS

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MEDIA ALERT

Heart Disease and Lung Cancer Won't Wait, But Patients May Have to Wait for Life-Saving Care

June 13, 2007

The Society of Thoracic Surgeons cordially invites you to a special congressional and press briefing entitled "*Heart Disease and Lung Cancer Won't Wait, But Patients May Have to Wait for Life-Saving Care*," where you will learn about the disturbing national trend affecting seniors and the surgical specialty which treats heart disease and lung cancer, the two leading causes of death for Americans.

Today, the National Residency Match Program will announce the 2008 residency match for the cardiothoracic surgery training programs around the country. Preliminary data indicates that approximately one-third of the residency slots for cardiothoracic surgeons will go unfilled, which would mark the third consecutive year of such dismal results. Since 1995, CT surgery training programs have seen applicant numbers drop by 51 percent.

Compounding the problem is new survey research showing that more than 50 percent of cardiothoracic surgeons are over the age of 55 and planning to retire within 10 to 13 years. It takes 12 years (medical school and residency) to train a cardiothoracic surgeon. This equates to an immediate crisis for patients with heart disease and lung cancer – they may soon have to wait for critical surgical care.

Hear from leading cardiothoracic surgeons and Congress on this problem and the solutions.

- U.S. Representative Charles Boustany, Jr., MD, (R-LA)
- Douglas Mathisen, MD, Professor of Thoracic Surgery Harvard Medical School and Head of Surgery, Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA
- Stephen Lahey, MD, Chief of the Division of Cardiothoracic Surgery, Maimonides Medical Center, Brooklyn, NY
- Nathan Bates, MD, chief cardiothoracic surgery resident at Massachusetts General Hospital, Boston, MA
- Joseph Zurla, Brooklyn, NY, cardiothoracic surgery patient

When: Monday, June 18, 2007 at 10:30 a.m.

Where: U.S. Capitol, Room HC-7

**To attend, RSVP by Friday June 15 to:
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