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News

STS Press Release

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For Immediate Release

David M. Shahian Honored for Groundbreaking Contributions to Cardiothoracic Surgery Quality Improvement

STS Distinguished Service Award recognizes dedication to improving the specialty

HOUSTON (January 23, 2017) – Renowned quality improvement expert and public reporting advocate David M. Shahian, MD is the recipient of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons 2017 Distinguished Service Award, presented this evening at the Society’s 53rd Annual Meeting.

“Dr. Shahian has been a visionary, persistent, and tactical genius, who has passionately taken quality improvement in cardiothoracic surgery to the next level,” said 2016-2017 STS President Joseph E. Bavaria, MD. “I think he’s an incredibly important part of the Society and our mission, with contributions that have been seminal.”

An STS member since 1985, Dr. Shahian has served the organization in many capacities, including his 6-year tenure as Chair of the STS Workforce on National Databases and his current role as Chair of the STS Council on Quality, Research, and Patient Safety. He also serves on the National Quality Registry Network, CMS Star Ratings Expert Panel, and the National Quality Forum Board of Directors and Executive Committee.

Dr. Shahian has been involved in health policy issues for more than 20 years, particularly in the areas of performance measurement and public reporting. He helped the Society develop and implement multiple cardiac and general thoracic surgery risk models and composite performance measures. He also has been a leader in the establishment of the Society’s acclaimed Public Reporting Program.

“Dr. Shahian is a thoughtful clinician and analytics expert with a sophisticated understanding of statistics and metrics. These qualities have allowed him to lead the evolution of the STS National Database to its position as the finest clinical outcomes registry in cardiothoracic surgery, if not all of medicine,” said 2016-2017 STS First Vice President Richard L. Prager, MD. “He recognizes the importance of data and has the ability to expand registries so that they meet surgeon, hospital, government, and industry needs. It’s a rare combination, and Dr. Shahian does it with a calmness, maturity, and thoughtfulness that few have.”

The STS National Database—which is widely regarded as the gold standard of clinical outcomes registries—was established in 1989 as an initiative for quality improvement and patient safety among cardiothoracic surgeons. The Database has three components, each focusing on a different area of cardiothoracic

surgery—Adult Cardiac Surgery, Congenital Heart Surgery, and General Thoracic Surgery. STS Public Reporting Online enables Database participants to report, on a voluntary basis, their numeric scores on the surgical quality metrics that Dr. Shahian helped to develop and their corresponding star ratings.

“One of the most important and influential endeavors that the Society has ever embarked on is the STS National Database,” explained Dr. Bavaria. “The Database has evolved and improved considerably over the years. Dr. Shahian has been behind all of that, with his decisions and influences being spot on. His selflessness and total commitment regarding our mission toward quality has been unparalleled.”

A graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Medical School, Dr. Shahian trained in general surgery at Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) and was a fellow in cardiothoracic surgery at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago. For nearly 20 years, he chaired the Department of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery at the Lahey Hospital & Medical Center in Massachusetts. Dr. Shahian currently holds the positions of Professor of Surgery at Harvard Medical School, Vice President of the MGH Center for Quality and Safety, and Associate Director of the MGH Codman Center for Clinical Effectiveness in Surgery.

In addition to his clinical career, Dr. Shahian is the author or co-author of more than 200 peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters. His research has focused on performance measurement, public reporting, and related health policy issues.

“Dr. Shahian is an enlightened man and surgeon—someone who has put in a lot of time and effort for the advancement of cardiothoracic surgeons and their patients,” said Dr. Bavaria.

The Distinguished Service Award, established in 1969, recognizes individuals who have made significant and far-reaching contributions to STS and the specialty.

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For more information, contact STS Media Relations Manager Jennifer Bagley at (312) 202-5865 or jbagley@sts.org.

Founded in 1964, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a not-for-profit organization representing approximately 7,200 cardiothoracic surgeons, researchers, and allied health care professionals worldwide who are dedicated to ensuring the best possible outcomes for surgeries of the heart, lung, and esophagus, as well as other surgical procedures within the chest. The Society’s mission is to enhance the ability of cardiothoracic surgeons to provide the highest quality patient care through education, research, and advocacy.