

AQO Materials Available; Claim Credit by October 31

Thanks to all who attended Advances in Quality & Outcomes: A Data Managers Meeting in September. The meeting was a great success, with approximately 600 attendees and other participants. [Watch the video](#) of STS President Joseph E. Bavaria, MD welcoming attendees to AQO.

A link to access presentation slides and abstracts was e-mailed to attendees last week. If you did not receive the e-mail, contact Lindsey Meyer at lmeyer@sts.org. The deadline to claim continuing education credit has been extended to Monday, October 31; visit www.corexcel.com/sts to do so. And save the date for the 2017 AQO meeting, which will be held October 18-20 in Chicago.

ACSD Participants: Sign 2016 PQRS Consent Form to Avoid Payment Cut

The STS National Database is designated as a Qualified Clinical Data Registry for the Physician Quality Reporting System, and individual surgeons participating in the Adult Cardiac Surgery Database (ACSD) are eligible to reap the benefits of this designation. In order to benefit, participating surgeons [must sign a consent form by October 31, 2016](#), that will allow STS to submit data on [17 different measures](#) to the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services on their behalf. **A new consent form must be signed every year.** Surgeons who report these data for 2016 will avoid a 2% payment cut in 2018. This service is free for STS members.

STS Launches Innovative Research Program

Participants in the STS National Database can now take advantage of an innovative new program—the [STS Participant User File \(PUF\) Research Program](#). This research program allows an analysis of national-scale de-identified data from the STS National Database at investigators' institutions. It was designed primarily as an affordable option for investigators to pose research questions, quickly obtain quality data, analyze these data themselves given appropriate biostatistics resources, receive feedback, and develop their efforts into abstracts and manuscripts. [PUF applications](#) currently are being accepted for data in the ACSD. Data from the General Thoracic Surgery Database (GTSD) and Congenital Heart Surgery Database (CHSD) will become available in the first and second quarters of 2017, respectively. If you have questions about the PUF Program, contact Robert Habib at rhabib@sts.org.

Register for the STS Annual Meeting in Houston

Registration and housing are now open for the [STS 53rd Annual Meeting](#), January 21-25, 2017, in Houston, Texas. A number of sessions will focus on teamwork in cardiothoracic surgery, quality improvement initiatives, and the STS National Database, including:

- Multidisciplinary Response to Emergencies: Strategies for Team Members
- Redefining Practice Through Quality and Evidence: What's New
- Early Riser Session: Research Using the STS National Database

You'll also be able to visit the STS Regional Data Managers booth in the Exhibit Hall and learn how you can become more involved in regional quality improvement efforts. Check out the [Advance Program](#) for more details, and [register today](#).

Quick Hits: Hospital Name Clean-Up, Surgeon Lists, Webinar, Survey Results

- As the STS National Database moves closer to continuous harvesting, it is imperative that the hospital name in each participant's dataset matches the [hospital name and NPI number](#) in the Participant Identification Database. DCRI will soon be contacting ACSD participants with instructions on how to correct any inconsistencies; GTSD and CHSD participants will be contacted in the first quarter of 2017.
 - Review your list of participating surgeons and submit any necessary changes on the [Participant Contact Form](#) no later than November 1, 2016. Database participation fees for 2017 will be based partially on the number of active surgeons listed.
 - Nearly 600 data managers completed a survey this past summer describing their work with the STS National Database. Nearly a quarter of data managers have been abstracting Database cases for 10 or more years! Most (30.8%) abstract between 16-30 cases a month, with each case taking 1-2 hours to abstract for 56.4% of respondents. [Review the full survey results.](#)
 - A [webinar is available](#) to orient new data managers with the GTSD data collection form. It reviews required fields, field definitions, and data capture thresholds.
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