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News

For Immediate Release

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Elaine Weiss Named Executive Director of The Society of Thoracic Surgeons *AAD CEO and former HHS regional director to take helm of world's largest group of heart and lung surgeons*

CHICAGO (February 6, 2019) — The Society of Thoracic Surgeons (STS) has hired Elaine Weiss, JD, as its Executive Director beginning in April 2019. She replaces Robert A. Wynbrandt, JD, who is retiring after more than 30 years with the Society—17 years as Executive Director & General Counsel and 15 years as outside legal counsel before STS became a self-managed organization in 2002.

“When we formed the search committee last year, we knew we had some big shoes to fill, given the success of our organization under Rob Wynbrandt,” said STS President Robert S.D. Higgins, MD, MSHA, surgeon-in-chief of The Johns Hopkins Hospital, as well as the William Stewart Halsted Professor of Surgery and Director of the Department of Surgery at The Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. “We unanimously chose Elaine Weiss for her experience, intelligence, dynamic personality, and exceptional track record in the health care arena. We are honored and privileged that she will help lead STS into the future.”

Weiss joins the Society’s staff after many years in the professional association space. Currently, she is the Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer of the American Academy of Dermatology; she previously served as the CEO of the Illinois CPA Society and as an Associate Executive Director of the American Bar Association.

“I am honored to inherit this position after Rob’s long and successful tenure,” said Weiss. “The health care environment is undergoing seismic changes. I am excited to work with STS surgeon leaders and staff to understand how these changes impact cardiothoracic surgeons and the patients they serve. My professional background in health care policy and association management provides me with the interest, experience, and enthusiasm to ensure that STS continues helping members navigate the rapidly changing health care landscape.”

Weiss has a deep understanding of health care from both the clinical and administrative perspectives. In 1993, she was appointed by President Bill Clinton to serve as Midwest Regional Director for the United States Department of Health & Human Services. In this position, Weiss represented the Administration on all health care policy matters and liaised with Midwest governors, mayors, congressional delegations, special interest groups, and the public.

This experience will be important as STS continues its work promoting better patient access to lung cancer screening, addressing the impact of electronic health records on the specialty, and easing a projected shortage of cardiothoracic surgeons. She also will be valuable as the Society enhances the STS National Database—already considered the gold standard among clinical outcomes registries—and supports legislative and regulatory efforts that will allow data from clinical registries and Medicare claims to be combined for outcomes-based research that may lead to improved health care quality and cost-effectiveness.

“Elaine has been a successful and respected leader throughout her career, and she has made positive contributions to every organization in which she has served,” added Dr. Higgins. “Her health advocacy, administrative experience, and legal background will be instrumental in helping STS advance the cardiothoracic surgery profession and improve care for our patients.”

Weiss holds a bachelor of science degree from Northwestern University’s Medill School of Journalism and a juris doctorate from the National Law Center at George Washington University.

She is passionate both inside and outside the office. Weiss is a news junkie, a diehard Cubs fan, loves cooking and entertaining, and is an exuberant dog lover, caring for two 80-pound goldendoodles. She and her husband, Larry Greenberg, have a blended family with five sons ranging in age from 22 to 31.

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Founded in 1964, The Society of Thoracic Surgeons is a not-for-profit organization representing more than 7,500 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. Learn more at sts.org or on the Society’s patient website at ctsurgerypatients.org.

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