

New online tools provide best practices in surgical care for older adults

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The American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS) and the American Geriatrics Society (AGS), with funding from The John A. Hartford Foundation, today unveiled one of the field's first suites of online tools to aid surgeons and related medical sub-specialists who care for older people. With the number of older adults undergoing surgery increasing faster than the rate of the population aging itself, the new series of nine AGS' Geriatrics Virtual Patient Cases (VPCs) for Surgical and Related Medical Sub-Specialties are geared toward helping the entire healthcare system better understand and respond to the unique care needs of older adults.

"To advance the care we all want as we age, we need to work together to ensure all healthcare professionals have a basic understanding of geriatrics principles," said Thomas Robinson, MD, one of the three leads for the multi-specialty editorial board responsible for the development of the VPCs. "This new set of [online tools](#) reflects the partnerships we need to spread learning and transform care."

The VPCs will be available for free through 2020 to the first 1,000 subscribers at GeriatricsCareOnline.org. The Geriatrics VPCs focus on aspects of surgical care unique to older individuals, a growing patient population for all healthcare professionals, including those without formal geriatrics training. Both continuing medical education and Member Boards' Maintenance of Certification (MOC) [credit are available](#) to those who successfully complete each VPC.

The nine interactive multimedia clinical scenarios explore key challenges and opportunities that health professionals may encounter when working to improve care for [older people](#) facing surgery—from the proper management of medications to issues surrounding surgical delirium and the need to document end-of-life care preferences and expectations. The VPCs were developed by a diverse group of content experts that included medical specialists from general surgery, urology, ophthalmology, orthopaedics, geriatrics, anesthesiology and emergency medicine.

"In addition to presenting realistic clinical tasks, the Geriatrics VPCs for Surgical and Related Medical Sub-Specialties also offer learners real-time feedback on their choices, alternative solutions, and more," noted Andrew Lee, MD, another co-lead editor for the project. "Opportunities for using the cases to fulfill MOC requirements also are helping to embed tools like these patient cases—and hence geriatrics expertise—more broadly within the framework of how our health professionals sustain ongoing education."

"Addressing the unique health care requirements in this rapidly growing patient population is an important and evolving public health need," stated Richard E. Hawkins, MD, ABMS President and Chief Executive Officer. "ABMS is pleased to be a partner in developing these educational tools and offering MOC credit to engage Board Certified physicians in learning about the specific needs of geriatric surgical patients."

Co-lead editor Myron Miller, MD, AGSF added: "Proactive health systems know that healthcare's future requires bold approaches that value [older adults](#), address their unique needs, and provide the best care and support possible. Assistance from The John A. Hartford Foundation has enabled diverse partners, such as ABMS and AGS, to ensure that geriatrics expertise can move and grow with us across the continuum of

our [care](#)."

Provided by American Geriatrics Society

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