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ASGE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM TRAINS TEN PHYSICIANS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN GI ENDOSCOPIC PROCEDURES

OAK BROOK, Ill. – April 6, 2010 – The American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) launched its new initiative, the ASGE Ambassador Program, in Cairo, Egypt, on February 19, 2010. The Ambassador Program was designed to export two of the society’s greatest assets—training expertise and gastrointestinal endoscopic care—to developing countries lacking physicians skilled in therapeutic endoscopy. ASGE members serving as Ambassadors trained ten physicians from Egypt, Nigeria, the Republic of Sudan, and Kenya in basic and advanced procedures that were previously unavailable to the majority of the patient populations. The ASGE Ambassador Program was proposed by ASGE President Jacques Van Dam, MD, PhD, FASGE, and was made possible through the generous support of PENTAX Medical Company, along with donations from AstraZeneca Foundation and US Endoscopy.

“We developed this program because easy access to advanced gastrointestinal care does not exist in developing countries. ASGE Ambassadors brought their endoscopic and teaching skills to physicians in these countries so that patients who need basic or advanced endoscopy will have access to procedures that will help them and may ultimately save their lives,” said Dr. Jacques Van Dam. “The inaugural program was very successful. The Ambassadors covered many therapeutic endoscopic techniques, and the physicians that they trained will be able to utilize these new skills to help their own patients, and more importantly, they can teach their fellow physicians the same procedures so that access to endoscopic care will be vastly improved. We thank our Ambassadors for donating their time and talents to this humanitarian program, and we also thank our generous sponsors and the Cairo Training Center staff for making this program possible.”

The ASGE Ambassador Program was held at the Cairo Training Center. This Center is located within the Theodor Bilharz Research Institute and is accredited by the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO). Through the generosity of the WGO, ASGE’s Ambassador Program was able to utilize this outstanding facility as its venue for the visiting Ambassadors and trainees. The weeklong program

covered numerous topics related to upper gastrointestinal bleeding—one of the most common gastrointestinal afflictions facing developing nations in Africa today. The program consisted of didactic sessions and hands-on instruction with the ASGE physicians and their trainees treating patients in need of procedures previously not commonly performed in those developing nations represented by the trainees.

A follow-up to the training program was conducted in late March to further educate and evaluate the progress of the newly trained physicians, and to assess the impact of the program. Future missions are currently being planned for other countries; the endoscopic procedures that the ASGE Ambassadors will teach will be specifically relevant to the common problems of the recipient nations. The ultimate goal of the program is to decrease illness and deaths from untreated digestive disorders in underserved populations.

The ASGE members who served as Ambassadors in the inaugural mission are John M. DeWitt, MD, FASGE of Indiana University Medical Center; Professor Ibrahim Mostafa, MD, Director of the Cairo Training Center, Theodor Bilharz Research Institute, Cairo, Egypt; Mostafa Ibrahim Mostafa, MD, Theodor Bilharz Research Institute Cairo, Egypt; David H. Robbins, MD, Lenox Hill Hospital, Center for Advanced Endoscopy, New York; and Virendra Singh, MD, Postgraduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, India.

The physicians that were trained in Cairo include Firoz Alimohamed, MD, Mombasa, Kenya; Randa Zaki A. M. Khair, MD, Khartoum, Sudan; Emuobor Odeghe, MD, Lagos, Nigeria; Adeleye Olufunke, MD, Idiaraba, Lagos, Nigeria; Aderemi Omololu Oluyemi, MD, Marina, Lagos, Nigeria; Ahmed Omer Abaker Ahmed Elnor, MD, Nyala, Sudan; Ali Abd El Rahim Ali, MSC, Giza, Egypt; Waleed Mohamed Soliman, MSC, Giza, Egypt; Fatuma Faraj Some, MD, Eldoret, Kenya; and Abdulmumini Yakubu, MD, Sokoto, Nigeria.

To become an ASGE Ambassador, physicians must be an active or international member of ASGE for a minimum of five years. For more information on becoming an ASGE Ambassador for future programs, visit <http://www.asge.org/ambassador.aspx>. The ASGE Ambassador Program is funded entirely through the generous support of industry and private donations. For those interested in donating to the Ambassador Program, please visit <http://www.asge.org/ambassador.aspx> or email AmbassadorProgram@asge.org.

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About the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

Since its founding in 1941, the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) has been dedicated to advancing patient care and digestive health by promoting excellence in gastrointestinal endoscopy. ASGE, with more than 11,000 members worldwide, promotes the highest standards for endoscopic training and practice, fosters endoscopic research, recognizes distinguished contributions to endoscopy, and is the foremost resource for endoscopic education. Visit www.asge.org and www.screen4coloncancer.org for more information and to find a qualified doctor in your area.

About Endoscopy

Endoscopy is performed by specially-trained physicians called endoscopists using the most current technology to diagnose and treat diseases of the gastrointestinal tract. Using flexible, thin tubes called endoscopes, endoscopists are able to access the human digestive tract without incisions via natural orifices. Endoscopes are designed with high-intensity lighting and fitted with precision devices that allow viewing and treatment of the gastrointestinal system.