



## **ASGE Ambassador Program Fact Sheet**



### **About The ASGE Ambassador Program**

The *ASGE Ambassador Program* is a philanthropic initiative designed to export basic and advanced GI endoscopy to areas in the world in need. ASGE members (domestic and international) who are willing to volunteer their time to the program serve as Ambassadors. The education and training of endoscopists, endoscopy nurses and technicians in underserved countries provides a tremendous opportunity for ASGE's members to advance endoscopy care and leave a lasting mark. The ultimate goal of the program is to decrease illness and deaths from untreated digestive disorders in underserved populations. To date, eight (8) ASGE Ambassador Programs and five follow-up programs have been completed. ASGE members who are willing to volunteer their time to the program are recruited to serve as "ASGE Ambassadors." Ambassadors are recruited via ASGE's website, e-communications and ASGE publications; trainees are recruited based on need, experience level and availability to travel.

### **Ambassador Program Goals**

1. Ensure patient safety — our top priority
2. Provide training to local physicians, nurses, and technicians on endoscopic techniques for diagnosing and managing common gastrointestinal disorders
3. Partner with host facilities, other GI organizations, industry, sponsors and ASGE members to develop a substantive program that leaves behind a legacy of quality medical care
4. Foster an interdisciplinary team approach to GI care
5. Demonstrate quality endoscopic practice, including disinfection and cross-contamination prevention

### **Success Stories**

#### *ASGE Ambassador Program: Cairo*

In February 2010, ASGE partnered with the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) to pilot the *Ambassador Program* at its training center in Cairo, Egypt. Physicians from Nigeria, Kenya, Sudan and Cairo participated in the training sessions. The program lasted a week and 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; ASGE physicians and the invited trainees treated patients in need of procedures that were not commonly performed in the developing nations represented by the trainees. A significant number of patients in this area of the world suffer from esophageal varices that, when left untreated due to lack of physicians performing endoscopy, lead to death from internal bleeding. A follow-up to the training program was conducted to further educate, evaluate the progress of the newly-trained physicians and to assess the impact of the program.

#### *ASGE Ambassador Program: Vietnam*

In November 2010, ASGE Ambassadors traveled to Hue City and Nha Trang to train physicians from the north, central and south regions of Vietnam during two separate conferences. Fifty physicians participated in sessions consisting of didactic lectures and hands-on training. The conferences focused on: 1) diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) for the treatment of bile duct stones and pancreatic cancer (both prevalent in Vietnam), 2) endoscopic ultrasonography (EUS) for the management of gastric and esophageal cancer (also common in the region), and 3) percutaneous endoscopic gastrostomy (PEG) placement to manage patients who are unable to eat due to head trauma (a common injury seen in Vietnam due to the widespread use of small motorbikes for transportation). A follow-up to the training program took place in early 2012 to further educate, evaluate the progress of the newly-trained physicians and assess the impact of the program.

#### *ASGE Ambassador Program: Ecuador*

In November 2011, ASGE Ambassadors traveled to Cuenca, Ecuador to train physicians from throughout the country. The program focused on upper GI tract malignancies and GI bleeding (variceal and non-variceal) and training sessions consisted of didactic lectures and hands-on training. Thirty physicians participated in the training and approximately forty-five patients were treated during the program.

A follow-up to the 2011 program was held in December 2013 to train 31 physicians from throughout Ecuador. The clinical focus of the program was on upper GI tract malignancies and GI bleeding (variceal and non-variceal).

### *ASGE Ambassador Program: Solomon Islands*

In December 2011, ASGE Ambassadors traveled to the Solomon Islands to carry out the program in conjunction with the Solomon Islands Living Memorial Project. The Solomon Islands is a developing country located in the southwestern Pacific and the country's main hospital, the National Referral Hospital (NRH) is located on Guadalcanal. The training session provided basic instruction on upper and lower endoscopy and care and management of equipment. Twenty physicians participated in the training and approximately twenty patients were treated during the program. The training session had a significant impact on patient care in the country. Follow-up programs were held in July 2012, January and July 2013, March 2014 and February 2015 to provide basic instruction in upper endoscopy, lower endoscopy and care and management of endoscopic equipment. Prior to these programs, the 4 surgeons at the NRH had no formal training and their current equipment was outdated and in poor condition.

### *ASGE Ambassador Program Taiwan*

In February 2012, four ASGE Ambassadors traveled to Taipei, Taiwan for a week-long training program which was carried out in collaboration with the Digestive Endoscopy Society of Taiwan (DEST). The program provided training in pancreatico-biliary endoscopy to treat pancreatico-biliary cancers and diagnostic and therapeutic ERCP. A total of thirty nine physicians participated in the program; twenty nine participants came from Taiwan and ten participants traveled from other Southeast Asian countries. As a result of this program, DEST will be working to establish a formal ERCP training and credentialing program in Taiwan.

### *ASGE Ambassador Program Brazil*

In December 2012, four ASGE Ambassadors traveled to Manaus, Brazil for a week-long training which was carried out in collaboration with the Brazilian Society of Digestive Endoscopy. Various SOBED representatives also traveled to Manaus to assist in the training. The program provided endoscopic training in band ligation, sclerotherapy, PEG, EMR, dilatations, foreign bodies, clips, endoloops and argon plasma coagulation through didactic lectures, hands-on workshops and endoscopic procedures. A total of twenty-nine physicians participated in the program. There were many patients who otherwise would not have received treatment and some patients traveled 2-3 days by boat to receive care. Over a three-day period, over 100 patients were treated.

### *ASGE Ambassador Program Serbia*

In September 2014, three ASGE Ambassadors traveled to Belgrade, Serbia for a three-day training which was carried out in collaboration with the Serbian Society for Digestive Endoscopy. Thirty physicians participated in the program from Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Bosnia, Croatia, Slovenia and Romania. The program focused on the diagnosis and treatment of colorectal cancer and premalignant lesions, pancreatico-biliary diseases, varices, portal hypertension and small bowel disease, including ERCP, EMR and EUS. Also, over 200 physicians participated in the didactic course and viewed the live cases through video transmission. Approximately 40 patients were treated.

### *ASGE Ambassador Program Myanmar*

In August 2015, four Ambassadors traveled to Yangon and Mandalay, Myanmar for a one-week training. The program was held at Mandalay General Hospital (MGH) in Mandalay and Thingangyun Sanpya General Hospital (TSGH) in Yangon and focused on ERCP (basic and advanced), EUS, EMR & ESD and provided training to 50 physicians from Myanmar. During the course of the program, approximately 50 patients were treated.

### *ASGE Ambassador Program Romania*

In September 2017, four Ambassadors traveled to Iasi, Romania for a three-day training at the Regional Institute of Oncology. The program provided didactic and hands-on training focusing on basic and more advanced polypectomy techniques (EMR, ESD), highlighting the importance of colon cancer screening, especially colonoscopic polypectomy to decrease the incidence of colorectal cancer. Thirty patients were treated during the program.

## **Questions or Comments?**

For additional information about the *ASGE Ambassador Program*, view the [program brochure](#) or visit the [related webpage](#) at ASGE online. To donate to this philanthropic initiative, please complete a [donation form](#). If you have other questions the please contact Director of International Initiatives, Holly Becker via email at [hbecker@asge.org](mailto:hbecker@asge.org) or telephone at (630) 570-5631.