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**PENTAX MEDICAL COMPANY GRANTS \$50,000 TO SUPPORT THE ASGE
AMBASSADOR PROGRAM FOR GI ENDOSCOPIC TRAINING IN
DEVELOPING COUNTRIES**

In partnership with the WGO, the program is designed to export basic and advanced GI endoscopic medical care and physician training expertise to countries in need

OAK BROOK, Ill. – October 5, 2009 – The American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) is proud to announce a \$50,000 grant from PENTAX Medical Company to support the ASGE Ambassador Program, a new initiative designed to export basic and advanced gastrointestinal endoscopic medical care and physician training expertise to developing countries. ASGE has partnered with the World Gastroenterology Organisation (WGO) to pilot the Ambassador Program at its training center in Cairo, Egypt, in January 2010. ASGE will recruit its members to serve as “Ambassadors” by volunteering their time to this philanthropic program.

“Ready access to advanced digestive healthcare does not exist in developing countries and the incidence of death from gastrointestinal bleeding is significant,” said ASGE President Jacques Van Dam, MD, PhD, FASGE. “This program aims to decrease illness and deaths in underserved populations from untreated digestive disorders, specifically bleeding varices. We are grateful to PENTAX for their generous support of the ASGE Ambassador Program and for recognizing the need for education and training of physicians in international centers that are lacking in access to quality gastrointestinal medical care.”

ASGE will enlist physicians from Nigeria, Kenya and throughout northern Africa as well as from areas in the Middle East to take part in the training. A significant number of patients in this part of the world suffer from esophageal varices (an enlarged and tortuous vein, artery or lymphatic vessel) that, when left untreated due to the lack of physicians performing endoscopy, leads to death from internal bleeding. Trainees will be recruited based on need, level of experience and availability to travel. The WGO has a waiting list of more than 200 physicians who have indicated that they would like to participate in future programs at the training center in Cairo; ASGE and WGO will work together to select those with the greatest need.

“PENTAX is proud to provide funding for this critical program. As a company committed to digestive health through the development of innovative medical technologies, we believe that supporting the ASGE Ambassador Program will save many lives and leave a lasting impact on those countries that are in desperate need of physicians who are properly trained in gastrointestinal endoscopic procedures,” said Ann Marie Connolly-Garcia, Director of Marketing, PENTAX Medical Company.

For the pilot training program, ASGE Ambassadors will travel to Cairo and train physicians from northern Africa and the Middle East in endoscopy for the diagnosis and treatment of upper gastrointestinal disorders. The ten-day training will take place in the WGO-sponsored Cairo Training Center located in the Theodor Bilharz Research Institute. An extensive curriculum, incorporating didactic and hands-on training, will be implemented and 80-100 patients will be treated during the course of the training session. The initial training will be followed by a second visit to the home institution of selected trainees. The second visit will take place eight to ten weeks following the training in Cairo. Ambassadors will further train those individuals at the bedside of patients in their home country, which will encourage the program’s sustainability.

To become an ASGE Ambassador, physicians must be an active member of ASGE for a minimum of five years. For more information on becoming an ASGE Ambassador, 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 nearly 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 PENTAX

PENTAX Medical Company, headquartered in Montvale, New Jersey, is a division of PENTAX of America, Inc., a consolidated subsidiary of Japan’s HOYA Corporation. PENTAX Medical Company is an industry leader specializing in the development of video and fiber endoscopy equipment and computer technology/imaging products for diagnostic, therapeutic and research applications in the GI, ENT and Pulmonary medical fields. For more information on the company and its products, visit the company’s website at www.pentaxmedical.com.

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.