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**ASGE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM TRAINS 50 PHYSICIANS IN VIETNAM  
ON GI ENDOSCOPIC PROCEDURES**

**OAK BROOK, Ill. – Dec. 8, 2010** – The American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) held its second Ambassador Program in Vietnam from October 30 to November 11, 2010. The initiative is designed to export basic and advanced gastrointestinal (GI) endoscopic medical care and physician training expertise to developing countries. ASGE collaborated with the Khanh Hoa Hospital, Nha Trang, Hue College of Medicine and Pharmacy, Hue City, and Choray Hospital, Ho Chi Minh City, to conduct two conferences in Central and South Vietnam. ASGE members serving as Ambassadors trained 50 physicians in basic and advanced procedures that were previously unavailable to the majority of patients in the region. The ASGE Ambassador Program Vietnam was made possible through the generous support of PENTAX Medical Company and Olympus America, and the donation of GI medical supplies by Cook Medical.

“The Ambassador Program Vietnam was a resounding success. Local physicians who had previously not had any experience with certain endoscopic techniques quickly learned new procedures, such as PEG placement, ERCP and EUS, thanks to the skillful teaching of talented ASGE member volunteers,” said M. Brian Fennerty, MD, FASGE, president, American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. “Through lectures, videos and hands-on training, the program brought much needed endoscopic medical expertise to improve patient care in Vietnam. The trainee physicians were enthusiastic and expressed gratitude for the program. They will now be able to educate colleagues at their home institutions on what they learned during the program to further benefit healthcare in the region.”

The Vietnam program follows the successful launch of the initiative in Cairo, Egypt, held in February 2010. ASGE recruited members to serve as “Ambassadors” who volunteered their time to this philanthropic program. The Ambassadors were: Andrew Giap, MD, Raj Shah, MD, Franklin Kasmin, MD, FASGE, Jerry Siegel, MD, FASGE, Kai Matthes, MD, PhD. They trained 50 physicians from North, Central and South Vietnam, as well as physicians from Indonesia and Laos, at the Khanh Hoa Hospital, Nha Trang, Hue College of Medicine and Pharmacy, Hue City, and Choray Hospital, Ho Chi Minh City. Approximately 25 patients were treated during the programs.

Trainee physicians were recruited based on need, level of experience and availability to travel. The training programs focused on diagnostic and therapeutic endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography (ERCP) for the treatment of common bile duct stones and pancreatic cancer, both prevalent in Vietnam, and endoscopic ultrasound (EUS), for the management of gastric and esophageal cancer, which are also common in the region. In addition, physicians were trained in PEG placement to treat an inability to eat due to head trauma, a common injury seen in Vietnam due to the use of small motorbikes for transportation.

Ongoing evaluations are being sent in by the physicians and a follow-up to the training program will be planned within the year 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.

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, 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](mailto: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 12,000 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](http://www.asge.org) and [www.screen4coloncancer.org](http://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](http://www.pentaxmedical.com).

### **About Olympus America**

Olympus is a precision technology leader, designing and delivering innovative solutions in its core business areas: Medical and Surgical Products, Life Science Imaging Systems, Industrial Measurement and Imaging Instruments and Cameras and Audio Products.

Olympus works collaboratively with its customers and affiliates worldwide to leverage R&D investment in precision technology and manufacturing processes across diverse business lines. These include:

- Gastrointestinal endoscopes, accessories, and minimally invasive surgical products;

- Advanced research, clinical and educational microscopes and research and educational digital imaging systems;
- Industrial research, engineering, test, inspection and measuring instruments; and
- Digital cameras and voice recorders.

Olympus serves the healthcare field with integrated product solutions and financial, educational and consulting services that help customers to efficiently, reliably and more easily achieve exceptional results. Olympus develops breakthrough technologies with revolutionary product design and functionality for the consumer and professional photography markets, and also is the leader in gastrointestinal endoscopy and clinical and educational microscopes. For more information, visit [www.olympusamerica.com](http://www.olympusamerica.com).

#### **About Cook Medical**

Founded in 1963, Cook Medical pioneered many of the medical devices now commonly used to perform minimally invasive medical procedures throughout the body. Today, the company integrates medical devices, drugs and biologics to enhance patient safety and improve clinical outcomes. Since its inception, Cook has operated as a family-held private corporation. For more information, visit [www.cookmedical.com](http://www.cookmedical.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.