

Our Future is Earned, Our Promise is Kept

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Every organization is ultimately defined by their values.

For more than a century, the American College of Surgeons has gone so much further than that. Our values—our highest ideals and our most sacred commitments—are made manifest through action.

Our commitment to every patient is lived—it is earned—by maintaining the highest standards in surgery, by continuously improving quality, by embracing collaboration, by prioritizing knowledge. Our commitment is ongoing. Our commitment is **active**.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought this into focus. The world turned to health care providers for their expertise and commitment to patients when it mattered most. Surgeons rallied alongside their fellow health care providers to deliver care to patients, particularly the most critically ill; to help stop the corrosiveness of the virus; and to educate patients on the importance of vaccinations.

The strain on the health care system was enormous, and we can be proud of the action we took and the leadership role we have played to live up to our ideals to deliver the highest possible care and the best possible outcomes.

As we have since our founding, we are committed to meeting the challenges of the moment and to accepting the challenges to come.

A new initiative to recommit to our values

With that ethos of action as our foundation, now more than ever is the time to recommit to our values in a way that both bolsters and illuminates our unique combination of participation, education, collaboration, and innovation, all with the singular goal of the highest quality care for every patient.

We are excited to announce a new initiative to remind patients and our communities of the unique role of surgeons in society and, importantly, to remind ourselves of what it takes to earn it.

This new effort will elevate the core values we all believe; salute and inspire our continued dedication and purpose; and continue to center our own shared commitment around our active role to serve our patients and our communities.

Building on a century of trust

The key to expressing this commitment is embedded in the American College of Surgeons motto, which has stood the test of time for more than a century.

Selected in 1915, our motto “*Omnibus per artem fidemque prodesse,*” when translated to English, is traditionally recognized as “To heal all with skill and fidelity.”

Our colleague, Dr. Fred Weber **challenged all of us to think more expansively** about our motto and its meaning. He suggested that the traditional translation conveyed only a partial meaning—that “fidelity” is accurate, but that a more appropriate interpretation is “trust.”

To Heal All With Skill and Trust.

The reason I favor this revitalized translation has everything to do with that century-long commitment we have to actively participating in the best outcomes possible for our patients.

“Fidelity” is something we give. Again, it is certainly accurate and has served us well for a century.

But does it capture the ethos of our effort? “Trust,” as we all know from patient relationships and our deep relationships with each other and the communities we serve, is **earned**.

This is not a mere semantic distinction—this is a recommitment that our motto should reflect our collective and perpetual **effort to align** our expertise with our accessibility, our authority with our authenticity and our values with our actions.

A promise to our patients.

“To Heal All With Skill and Trust” is more than a statement of our core values or intentions—it is a promise:

We advocate fearlessly to improve the lives of every patient we treat and our field of practice.

The ACS has long been a powerful voice and actor for raising the standards of quality care in surgery.

We work ceaselessly to improve our capabilities and skills, through education, training and promoting excellence and expertise in surgery. Our commitment to the highest quality care delivers the best care for patients, decreases health care costs, and enhances patient outcomes.

And we have dedicated ourselves relentlessly for over a century to earn the trust of patients and to earn the special place of the surgeon in the community.

This promise celebrates our roots, salutes our purpose, and sets out our vision. It seeks to inspire, to build on our more than 100-year foundation of leadership and, yes, to challenge us all to recommit to the fundamental ethos of our profession—to be inspired and energized about our calling.

Though this promise, we seek to honor and invigorate your effort, your dedication, and your commitment, while staying true to the values that have earned us our unique and trusted relationship with each of our patients.