

# DEPARTMENT OF Surgery Newsletter

Summer 2020

Making history  
in the  
Department  
of Surgery



SEE PAGE  
FIVE FOR DETAILS.

## Chair's Column

Dear colleagues:

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, we were surrounded by uncertainty and challenges in all aspects of our lives: personally, as researchers, as educators, and as physicians providing essential patient care. We are very fortunate in London. Not only did our disease burden not reach expected levels, we demonstrated an outstanding ability to pull together as a Department to sustain our academic enterprise, ensure clinical capacity, and work constructively in multiple areas to protect the health of our teams. I am grateful for everyone's contributions during this unprecedented emergency.

At this time, it appears we have reached a new normal, which allows us to return to many activities temporarily

reduced or suspended during the first wave. However, we can't be complacent in thinking that the pandemic is over. Therefore, our planning now is focused on both recovery efforts to address the surgical backlog as well to formulate strategies for how we would curtail activities if required, in a short period of time. I am confident that we can depend on each other to handle whatever comes our way next. If you have any comments or suggestions, I would welcome



you to contact me or any leader in the Department of Surgery.

Despite the world being turned upside down, this newsletter issue is a celebration of our accomplished women in surgery. I would like to congratulate all of our faculty members promoted this past July and encourage you to read about the many ways in which our women surgeons are having an impact locally, nationally, and internationally.

I hope your summer plans have still brought time for rest and enjoyable activities with your families.

Sincerely,

**Emil H. Schemitsch, MD, FRCSC**  
Richard Ivey Professor  
Chair/Chief, Department of Surgery  
Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry  
Western University

## Surgery News

### Drs. Gerald Brock and Julie Ann Van Koughnett awarded Schulich Awards of Excellence



Dr. Julie Ann Van Koughnett, Assistant Professor, Division of General Surgery, was awarded a Schulich Excellence in Education Award. The Schulich Leader Award honours Dr. Van Koughnett's success and dedication to surgical education. Dr. Van Koughnett has served as the Program Director of the Department of Surgery's Surgical Foundations Program since 2016.

Dr. Gerald Brock, Professor, Division of Urology, was awarded a Dean's Award of Excellence Lifetime Achievement Award from the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry. The award is in recognition of Dr. Brock's accomplishments in the field of Urology and his distinguished service to the School.



### Department of Surgery Alumni receive Alumni of Distinction awards



Drs. Abdel-Rahman Lawendy (Young Alumni Award) and Supriya Singh (Community Service Award) and have been chosen as the successful awardees for the 2020 Alumni of Distinction Awards in honour of their outstanding contributions to the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University, the community, and their profession. Both Dr. Lawendy and Dr. Singh are alumni of the Orthopaedic Surgery residency program in the Department of Surgery at Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University.



### AMOSO Innovation Fund Competition Results



Dr. Ryan Degen, Assistant Professor, Orthopaedic Surgery, "Clinical and cost-effectiveness of total hip replacement versus hip arthroscopy in 40-60 year olds with hip osteoarthritis: A randomized trial" \$132,400

Dr. Luc Dubois, Associate Professor, Vascular Surgery, "Perioperative optimization using administrative data in Ontario" \$146,076



Dr. Anton Skaro, Associate Professor, General Surgery, "Abdominal Regional Perfusion in Donation After Cardiac Death Liver Transplantation: Exploring Biomarkers to Predict Graft Success" \$49,234 and "Hypercoagulation in SARS-CoV-2 infection – Conventional Coagulation Testing versus Point of Care Thromboelastography" \$49,234 (COVID-19 Research Grant).



Summer 2020

## Joy MacDermid receives Canadian Society of Hand Therapists Lifetime Membership Award



Dr. Joy MacDermid, Scientist and cross-appointed to the Division of Orthopaedic Surgery, is the recipient of the Canadian Society of Hand Therapists (CSHT) Lifetime Membership Award for 2020.

Dr. MacDermid is being honoured for her contributions to the development of hand therapy science and practice in Canada. Dr. MacDermid has recently been named 2020-2021 Canadian Orthopaedic Research Society (CORS) Member-at-Large and was also honoured with a Distinguished University Professorship from Western University, in recognition of her sustained excellence in scholarship, earlier this year.

## Lawson COVID-19 Internal Research Fund



Dr. Blayne Welk, Associate Professor, Division of Urology,

“Characterizing the burden of surgical care in CoVID-19 positive patients”

\$14,901

## Matthew Teeter named Petro Canada Young Innovator

Dr. Matthew Teeter, Scientist, Division of Orthopaedic Surgery, was recently awarded a Petro-Canada Young Innovator Award.

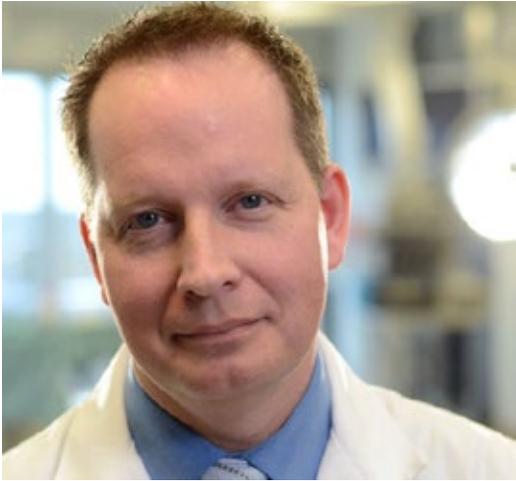
Dr. Teeter also holds an appointment in the Department of Medical Biophysics, and is combining wearable sensors with machine learning to help patients improve their understanding of their conditions and manage expectations of life after surgery.

Learn more about Dr. Teeter’s work at: <https://news.westernu.ca/2020/05/silvia-penuela-matthew-teeter-named-young-innovators/>



# Surgery News

## Dr. Christopher Schlachta appointed Site Chief of Surgery at University Hospital, London Health Sciences Centre



Dr. Christopher Schlachta, Professor, Division of General Surgery, has been appointed as Site Chief of Surgery at LHSC, University Hospital and the Department of Surgery, Western University, effective July 1, 2020 until June 30, 2023. Dr. Schlachta succeeds Dr. Douglas Naudie, who served in this role since 2014.

Dr. Schlachta received his undergraduate and medical degrees from McGill University, followed by a general surgery residency at Western University,

and a fellowship in Advanced Minimally Invasive Surgery at the University of Toronto. Dr. Schlachta joined the faculty at the University of Toronto and held the role of Division Head of General Surgery at St. Michael's Hospital before being recruited to London to serve as Medical Director of Canadian Surgical Technologies & Advanced Robotics (CSTAR) since 2005. He currently chairs the Department of Surgery's Innovation & Robotics Committee and sits on the Board of the Ontario Bariatric Network as the regional lead for bariatric surgery. He is Program Director of the Schulich Advanced GI MIS Fellowship, recently certified by the Fellowship Council.

In 2019, Dr. Schlachta was elected to the position of 2nd Vice President, Society of American Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) and is Chair of the SAGES Technology Council. He has previously served as President of the Canadian Association of General Surgeons, Chair of the Canadian Surgery Forum, and Governor of the American College of Surgeons. Dr. Schlachta has served as a reviewer for the Translational Research Institute: Human Exploration Research Opportunities (HERO) program at NASA, Section Editor of Advanced GI Disease for the journal *Surgical Endoscopy*, and the editorial board of the *Journal of Laparoendoscopic and Advanced Surgical Techniques*.

He has received grant funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation, Ontario Research Fund, AMOSO, PSI Foundation, and NSERC amounting to \$4.2 million as a lead investigator and \$8.2 million in collaboration. Dr. Schlachta has received numerous awards in honour of his contributions to surgical education and research, including Distinguished Educator Award from the University of Toronto's Surgical Skills Centre, Vanguard Awards for technology patents and licensing by World Discoveries, the John H Duff Award from the Division of General Surgery, and the Department of Surgery's Academic Merit Award. Dr. Schlachta has published more than 120 articles in the peer-reviewed literature, eight book chapters and a textbook. He has given many keynote presentations on the topic of surgical technology. In 2012, he was selected by the Canadian Medical Association to receive the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal.

Congratulations to Dr. Schlachta on his appointment as Site Chief, University Hospital, Department of Surgery and thank you to Dr. Naudie for his many years of outstanding service in this role.

## Drs. Ruby Grewal, Andreana Bütter, and Muriel Brackstone mark important milestone



Earlier this month, Drs. Muriel Brackstone, Division of General Surgery, Andreana Bütter, Division of Paediatric Surgery, and Ruby Grewal, Division of Orthopaedic Surgery, became the first women to be promoted to the rank of Full Professor in the Department of Surgery at the Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry, Western University. They, along, with Dr. Audra Duncan, Division of Vascular Surgery – who joined the Department of Surgery in 2015 as Full Professor – are the only women in the Department to hold this rank.

Full Professor is the highest rank that can be reached at Western University, and distinguishes the high level of achievement and international recognition of each members' record of performance and expertise.

Dr. Brackstone is actively involved in community and fundraising events in support of breast cancer research. She founded the London Tumour Biobank in 2013 and still serves as its Director, led in the development of Oncoplastic Breast Surgery education in Canada, and serves as the Medical Director of the London Breast Care Clinic. She is a member of the Breast Executive Committee for Cancer Care Ontario's Program in Evidence-Based Care, a member of the international NRG Breast Executive as well as the Canadian Clinical Trials Group, and is first author of a number of national and international clinical guidelines on the treatment of breast cancer.

Dr. Bütter is Chair of the Canadian Undergraduate Surgical Education Committee (CUSEC) and Vice-Chair of the Royal College

of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada's Paediatric Surgery Board Examinations. As the Associate Director of Surgical Education since 2014, she is actively involved in undergraduate education and is the faculty lead for numerous Schulich groups (Women in Surgery, FrancoDocs etc). Dr. Bütter helped to develop the first Canadian Robotic Paediatric Surgery Program, and is a member of the Pediatric Surgical Oncology Research Collaborative (PSORC). PSORC is a group of Canadian and American paediatric surgeons from more than 30 hospitals, working together to advance research and treatment of rare childhood cancer.

Dr. Grewal was recently awarded the prestigious American-British-Canadian Orthopaedic Travelling Fellowship, where she was one of two selected surgeons to represent the Canadian Orthopaedic Association. She spent five weeks travelling through the UK, Australia, and New Zealand to participate in leadership workshops, research and education seminars, conferences, and journal clubs. She has served as the Co-Director of the Roth McFarlane Hand and Upper Limb Clinic Clinical Research Lab since 2006, and chairs the multi-centre research group for clinical trials related to hand and wrist surgery WECan (Wrist Evaluators of Canada).

Women currently comprise 18 of the of 94 full-time clinical academic faculty in the Department of Surgery. A formal Committee in the Department of Surgery, led by Drs. Muriel Brackstone and Doug Ross, is examining how we can better support the recruitment, mentorship, and promotion of women surgeons across our range of subspecialties. In addition, last year the Department established a formal "Women in Surgery" group led by Dr. Brackstone, with its purpose to create an informal support network and professional development opportunity for women faculty in the Department of Surgery. Several successful events have been well-received and the group had two events planned for 2019-20, which were unfortunately postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope to reschedule a keynote lecture to be presented by Dr. Susan Moffatt-Bruce, Professor of Surgery and CEO of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, to be held virtually.



# Surgery News

## Surgical Quality Council Update

### Surgery Success in Delivering Discharge Summaries

The year 2020 has emphasized the importance of partnership and system wide thinking in healthcare more than ever. An important measure of quality transitions of care between acute care and primary care is - **the percentage of patients discharged from hospital with discharge summaries signed within 48 hours of the patient's discharge.** Timely sharing of discharge summaries ensures communication between providers and healthcare settings.

LHSC's Quality and Performance office is recognizing Surgery's improvement in increasing the delivery of **Discharge Summaries within 48 hours to Primary Care** a FY 2019/20 Q4 success story. Surgery improved from 26% in Q1 2017/18 to 54% in Q4 2019/20. Thoracic Surgery, Cardiac Surgery, and General Surgery were the top 3 performers in the Department of Surgery. [Otolaryngology](#) was an early leader as well.

#### What are some best practices?

In General Surgery, Dr. Patrick Colquhoun, LHSC's Surgical Quality Officer, shared that their intervention or change ideas were: education of the importance of timely information sharing and awareness of the expectations laid out by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. General Surgery highlighted that:

- Dictations, transcription, and authentication should be timely, and
- Engagement with consultants suggested trainees should be involved in Discharge Summaries, and everyone can learn to **"LOGIN =SIGNOUT!"**

Teams started to share that the workflow in Powerchart takes clinicians to the message center first for a reason. If consultants make a point of signing out of their dictations each time they logged into the system, discharge summaries could be completed on time more often. General Surgery also discussed performance

of the metric at General Surgery Grand Rounds to stress its importance and introduce the notion of **"LOGIN = SIGNOUT"** at the meeting.

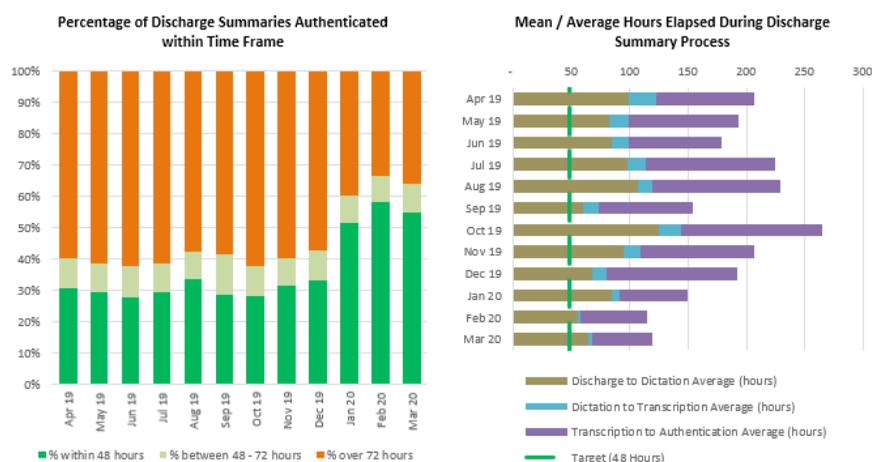
Chair/Chief of Thoracic Surgery Dr Richard Malthaner, says their success has been the result of two things:

- Dedicated Nurse Practitioners working on discharge summaries, and
- Use of Auto-Authentication Code 10.

Auto authentication Code 10 allows the discharge summary to be dictated and transcribed, and then automatically distributed. It is the accountability of the department/division Chair/Chief to ensure selected staff are trained and their discharge summaries are reviewed before allowing the use of code 10. The department/division should have a documented process of the residents that have been approved to use auto authentication.

LHSC's Quality and Performance office provides data to clinical leaders about several stages in the discharge

### Surgery Discharge Summaries within 48 Hours FY 2019/20 Monthly



summary process.

The graph on the left shows the percent of discharge summaries delivered within 48 hours; the percent between 48-72 hours; and the percent over 72 hours. The graph on

the right displays the average hours elapsed during different stages in the discharge summary process: discharge to dictation; dictation to transcription; and transcription to authentication.

### Are there standards and policy?

The importance of delivering discharge summaries within 48 hours is highlighted in the Ontario Health (Quality) **“Transitions Between Hospital and Home”** Quality Standard released in January 2020. The Quality Standard informs providers and patients about what high-quality health care looks like. Additionally, in September 2019, **The College of Physicians and Surgeons on Ontario (CPSO) updated their Transitions in Care policy** to outline that “the most responsible physician must complete a discharge summary for all inpatients within 48 hours of discharge in order to bill the Ontario Health Insurance Plan for a patient visit on the day of discharge. These expectations are also embedded in Accreditation Canada standards/Required Organization Practices” (CPSO, 2019).

### How are some of our peers doing?

LHSC is not alone in its efforts to improve performance on this indicator. St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital as well as Toronto’s University Health Network (UHN) have also made great progress on this work. St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital (STEGH) was experiencing higher-than expected readmission rates. In 2014, 41% of discharge summaries were being sent to primary care within 48 hours. By 2017 STEGH had met and exceeded their 80% target for more than one year, with a result of greater than 93% (*Healthcare Quarterly, 2017*). [UHN’s 2017 Year in Review describes the Quality Improvement Plan \(QIP\) Discharge Summary Program which earned a 3M Health Care Quality Team Award.](#) “89% of UHN Discharge Summaries are auto-faxed to primary care providers within 48 hours of completion, a significant improvement from 40% back in 2014. This greatly helps to reduce the likelihood of patient readmissions and to ensure appropriate follow-up care within seven days of discharge from UHN when needed” (Centre for Excellence in Education and Practice & University of Toronto. [Discharge Summary Checklist](#), 2015). Discharge Summaries are also available to patients through the “myUHN Patient Portal” where patients are able to access their own information and able to share it with whomever they choose.

**LHSC’s commitment to improvement on this indicator is evidenced by a new and more ambitious target for fiscal year 2020/21: the goal is now 65%.**

For information regarding LHSC’s Balanced Scorecard performance indicators please contact [QualityandPerformance@lhsc.on.ca](mailto:QualityandPerformance@lhsc.on.ca).

### REFERENCES:

- Sheridan, E., Thompson C., Pinheiro, T., et al. (2017). [Optimizing Transitions of Care – Hospital to Community Healthcare Quarterly](#): 45-49. doi:10.12927/hcq.2017.25135
- Frost, D and Taha, K. (2015). [University Health Network \(UHN\) Best Practices – Discharge Summaries](#). Centre for Excellence in Education and Practice & University of Toronto. [Discharge Summary Checklist](#). Toronto, ON.

## Changes to NSQIP/ NSQIP Pediatric/ TQIP REB Exemption Letter:

Please be aware that the Western Research Ethics Board (REB) has indicated that the previously issued exemption letter, which provided the REB waiver for American College of Surgeons National Surgical Quality Improvement Program (ACS NSQIP and NSQIP Pediatric) and Trauma Quality Improvement Program (TQIP) research, is no longer valid. This exemption letter previously permitted investigators permission to conduct research without obtaining REB approval. Now, all investigators seeking to utilize this data for research purposes will require REB approval (Delegated Level 1 - retrospective data) of their project. Please note that each research question will require a separate REB application and approval prior to beginning the project.

If you have any questions surrounding these new guidelines, please contact Celia Dann at [celia.dann@lhsc.on.ca](mailto:celia.dann@lhsc.on.ca)

## Coming Events

### Dr. Robert Zhong Department of Surgery Research Day

November 11, 2020

This year's event will be held virtually starting promptly at 1:00 p.m. Abstracts for resident presentations and pitches for the dragon's den competition will be accepted until **August 10, 2020**. Submission forms and guidelines are available online on the Department of Surgery Research Day website at: [www.schulich.uwo.ca/surgery](http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/surgery)

### Canadian Conference for the Advancement of Surgical Education (C-CASE)

October 29 & 30, 2020

The Canadian Conference for the Advancement of Surgical Education (C-CASE) will take place as a virtual meeting this year. This two-day conference, organized by the Canadian Undergraduate Surgical Education Committee, will have a theme of "Virtual Learning". Building on last year's successful inaugural conference, topics in virtual surgical education will be further explored through guest speakers and scientific sessions.

Registration is available online at: [www.cusec-ccecp.com](http://www.cusec-ccecp.com)

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All members of the Department are invited to submit story ideas, articles, photos, or comments for the fall issue. Please send them to: **Surgery\_E-CAST@lhsc.on.ca**, or call **519.646.6100 ext. 34776**

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