

For Immediate Release
March 30, 2015



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**SOUTHWEST ENDOSCOPY CENTER, DURANGO, COLORADO GRANTED
RENEWED RECOGNITION BY LEADING GASTROINTESTINAL MEDICAL SOCIETY
FOR QUALITY AND SAFETY**

DOWNERS GROVE, Ill. – March 30, 2015 – The American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE), a leading gastrointestinal medical society, has recently granted a three-year renewal recognition for quality and safety to the Southwest Endoscopy Center, Durango, Colorado as part of its program specifically dedicated to promoting quality in endoscopy in all settings where it is practiced in the United States. The Southwest Endoscopy Center is one of more than 450 endoscopy units to be granted the recognition since 2009. The ASGE Endoscopy Unit Recognition Program honors endoscopy units that have demonstrated a commitment to patient safety and quality in endoscopy as evidenced by meeting the program’s rigorous criteria, which includes following the ASGE guidelines on privileging, quality assurance, endoscope reprocessing, CDC infection control guidelines and ensuring endoscopy staff competency.

“We are honored to be recognized once again by ASGE for our efforts to enhance quality and safety in our endoscopy unit,” said Dr. Steven Christensen, the Center’s medical director. “Through ongoing education and continued compliance with the ASGE Endoscopy Unit Recognition Program requirements, we demonstrate our dedication to the delivery of high-quality patient care.”

The Southwest Endoscopy Center is the only facility in Southwest Colorado to have received this designation. It joins five other Colorado ambulatory surgery centers and hospitals currently holding ASGE’s recognition for promoting quality in endoscopy.

To be recognized by ASGE, a unit, through a peer-reviewed application process, must attest to the continued competence of all staff relative to their roles, demonstrate the adoption of unit policies specific to ongoing assessment of performance relative to key quality indicators, and attest that the unit has an established infrastructure and personnel dedicated to infection control and prevention. The program is applicable to all settings in the United States and Puerto Rico where endoscopy is practiced, including office-based endoscopy units, hospital-based endoscopy units, and stand-alone ambulatory endoscopy or surgery centers. An important component of the program is an educational course entitled, “Improving Quality and Safety in Your Endoscopy Unit,” that thoroughly reviews related guidelines. Upon completion of the program, successful applicants are awarded ASGE’s Certificate of Recognition of Quality in Endoscopy. The certificate is granted for a three-year renewable period. For a full list of program benefits, log on to www.asge.org.

“We are proud to acknowledge these endoscopy units through our Endoscopy Unit Recognition Program for their commitment to promoting the highest standards of safety and quality,” said Jonathan Cohen,

MD, FASGE, chair, ASGE Quality Assurance in Endoscopy Committee. “By ensuring infection control principles are adhered to, continually assessing the competency of staff, and monitoring patient satisfaction, ASGE-recognized units contribute to the public’s confidence in endoscopy, a life-saving technology.”

ASGE and Quality

ASGE is the profession’s leader in setting standards of excellence in endoscopy through its safety guidelines and the training of its members so that patients receive the best and safest care possible. The Society continually reinforces the importance of quality among its members through member communications, such as emails and newsletters, and its courses, including "Improving Quality and Safety in Your Endoscopy Unit.”

About the Southwest Endoscopy Center

The Southwest Endoscopy Center is Southwest Colorado’s leading provider of gastrointestinal endoscopic services, having provided over 37,500 endoscopic procedures since opening in the Durango Tech Center in 2001. Southwest Endoscopy is a locally owned and operated state-licensed ambulatory surgical center specializing in endoscopic services that is certified by the federal Medicare program and accredited by the Accreditation Association for Ambulatory Healthcare. It is operated in affiliation with Digestive Health Associates, PC, under the direction of Director of Nursing Sean Mouret, RN, BSN, CGRN and Facility Administrator Marianne Sloan, MBA. The Center is owned by Durango physicians Drs. Patrick Gerstenberger, Steven Christensen and Stuart Saslow. The Center can be reached at (970) 385-4022 and at www.digestivehealth.net or info@digestivehealth.net.

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 and innovation in gastrointestinal endoscopy. ASGE, with more than 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 and www.screen4coloncancer.org for more information and to find a qualified doctor in your area.

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.