



**ABDOMINAL CORE HEALTH  
QUALITY COLLABORATIVE**

# **ANNUAL REPORT**

**2024**

[www.ACHQC.org](http://www.ACHQC.org)

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

On behalf of the ACHQC Board, I extend our deepest gratitude to the surgeons, clinical care teams, FDA, industry partners and most importantly, our patients who are at the core of our efforts. Your dedication, collaboration, and contributions have been instrumental in driving innovation and improving outcomes and are the foundation of ACHQC's continued success.

This year was one of growth and transformation for our Collaborative. We focused on enriching engagement with our stakeholders, enhancing our robust real-world registry, and expanding our outreach.

Notably in 2024:

- ACHQC launched a new Hiatal Hernia Module within our registry. Joining the ventral and inguinal hernia modules, the Hiatal Hernia Module includes clinically relevant variables and quality metrics related to surgical treatment of esophageal disease.
- ACHQC expanded internationally, welcoming surgeons from the Brazilian Hernia Society. In their first year, six Brazilian hernia specialists entered 375 patients into the ACHQC Registry, furthering our global impact.
- In recognition of Hernia Awareness month, ACHQC's Patient Engagement & Advocacy Committee coordinated our first Facebook Live program, "Hernia Live", featuring surgeons and patients engaging in discussions surrounding patient-focused topics in hernia care. The enthusiasm of speakers and participants at the event was exceptional. We hope to offer many additional patient driven programs in the future.
- ACHQC developed, planned, and hosted our 6th Annual Quality Improvement Summit, an in-person collaborative meeting with close to 90 registrants. The educational program featured sessions on healthcare disparities, managing challenging cases, and optimizing patient outcomes.
- Analyses of data collected in the ACHQC Registry resulted in 40 peer-reviewed papers published in high caliber journals in 2024. Of particular importance was a paper authored by ACHQC and FDA colleagues which quantified the value and return on investment created by the ACHQC for regulatory decision-making.
- Our Registry has grown to include data on over 137,000 patients treated by 481 surgeons in 45 states across the USA. Of these, over 13,000 patients were entered in 2024.

ACHQC thrives on the synergy of our stakeholders who share a unified vision for improved patient care. Thank you to all who currently participate – your insights and dedication make us stronger as a Collaborative. To others who are looking for meaningful ways to give back, I invite you to learn more about our mission and hope you'll join us as we collectively improve the field of abdominal core health.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "MJR", enclosed in a white rectangular box.

Michael J Rosen, MD  
ACHQC President

# 2024 LEADERSHIP



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ACHQC Program  
Coordinator

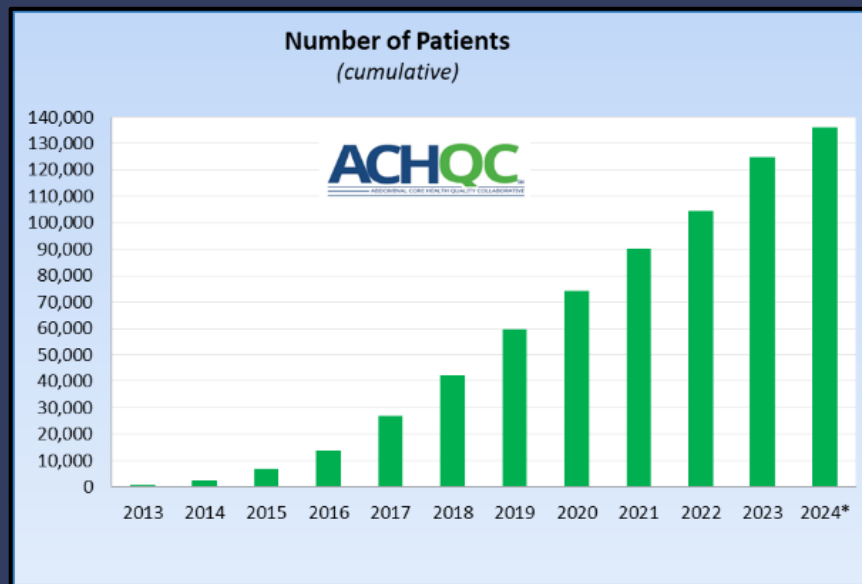


Debbie Fenoglio  
Patient Follow-up

# 2024 IMPACT

## BY THE NUMBERS

- Registry Growth: In 2024, data was collected on over 13,000 patients, bringing the total number of patients entered to over 137,000 by over 480 surgeons in the ACHQC Registry.
- Educational Reach: Engaged 5000+ patients and healthcare professionals through the free ACHQC app, the patient driven Hernia Live! program, our 6th Annual QI Summit, and clinical presentations at the annual American Hernia Society meeting.
- Research Contributions: 40 peer-reviewed publications. ACHQC's complete bibliography now includes 183 peer-reviewed papers.
- Global Expansion: ACHQC grew beyond the US, welcoming six surgeons from Brazil to the Collaborative



## ACHQC MISSION

To maximize the quality and value of health care for patients who suffer from hernia disease and diseases of the abdominal wall or abdominal core.

## SOCIAL MEDIA

Stay up to date with the latest from the ACHQC by following us



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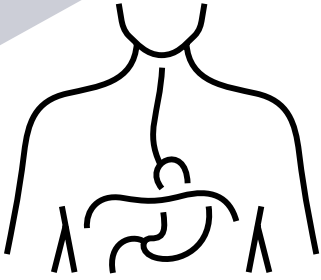
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## JOIN US

Be part of the ACHQC community and help shape the future of abdominal core health.

Visit [www.achqc.org](http://www.achqc.org) to learn more about our programs, membership, and opportunities to contribute.





## NEW HIATAL HERNIA MODULE

In January, our Registry expanded with the launch of a new module focused on hiatal hernia and foregut surgery.

Approximately 55%-60% of individuals over the age of 50 have a hiatal hernia. However, only about 9% have symptoms, which are most frequently managed with lifestyle changes and medication. When those modalities prove ineffective, surgical treatment may be considered. It is estimated that over 62,000 hiatal hernia repairs are performed in the US annually. With this Registry expansion, ACHQC can now address the need for data-driven quality improvement in surgical care of patients with gastrointestinal (GI) disease.

The ACHQC Hiatal Hernia Task Force, comprised of GI surgeons from across the country, worked diligently to design the new module focusing on the most essential measures – surgical results, and post-operative function. ACHQC participants collect, measure, and benchmark quality outcomes associated with hiatal hernia and other paraesophageal repairs.

*“We were very intentional in our development of this new hiatal hernia module, It was important that the task force identify appropriate variables and quality metrics related to surgical treatment of esophageal disease to assure key clinical information is collected by the ACHQC, with a streamlined data entry process.”*



Rebecca Petersen, MD, MSc, FACS  
Chair - Hiatal Hernia Task Force

To date, over 300 cases have been collected in the hiatal hernia module.

## JOIN ACHQC

Be part of the ACHQC community and help shape the future of abdominal core health.

- Gain access to quality outcome practices with real time data.
- Highlight your dedication to Quality Care & Drive Value
- Peer-to-peer Engagement & Learning

Learn more about our programs, membership, and opportunities to contribute.

[Click Here to Learn More](#)

# PATIENT ENGAGEMENT

## HERNIA LIVE!

In recognition of the importance of improving education surrounding hernia care and abdominal core health, ACHQC's Development and Patient Engagement & Advocacy Committees hosted "Hernia Live" a free, patient-focused educational event moderated by hernia specialists Drs. Kaela Blake and Shirin Towfigh. Joining our moderators were a panel of expert surgeons and engaging patients discussing relevant topics of interest including:

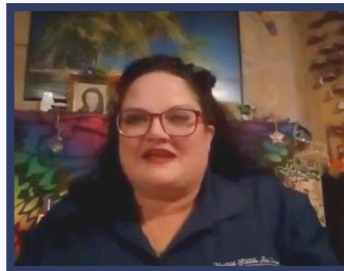
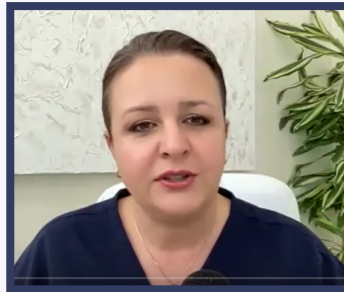
- Hernia 101: What is a hernia, how to recognize a hernia and how are hernias fixed?
- Mesh vs. No Mesh: Understanding your options
- Communication Barriers: Enhancing patient/surgeon conversations by speaking with surgeons
- Setting Yourself up for Success: What can patients do before surgery to optimize outcomes and set expectations for after surgery?



*"We want to raise awareness and provide education to improve care to our patients. Thank you to all who participated in Hernia Live!"*

-Kaela Blake, MD

The enthusiasm of speakers and participants at the event was exceptional, with patients requesting future development of a series of collaborative "Live" programs.



*Dr. Shirin Towfigh and Dr. Nora Fullington were joined by patients who shared their hernia surgery journey*

## We Asked Patients...What would you like to share with the ACHQC and other patients?



"I really like what the ACHQC is doing to collect data."

"My surgeon spoke highly of the ACHQC and the importance of having an organization dedicated to objective support for patients."

"Communication is key"

"The physical therapy prior to my surgery was the best thing. It made my recovery so easy."

"We need more education. I am hoping to help people not have to go through surgeries uninformed and with lack of knowledge of potential outcomes."

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."



[Click Here to View Hernia Live](#)

# CLINICAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT



## REGISTRY UPGRADE

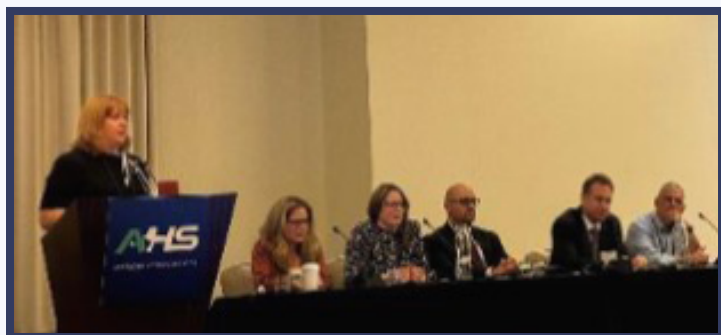
ACHQC's robust clinically focused real-world registry is the core of our quality improvement initiatives. This year we made significant upgrades to our Registry, designed to enhance efficiency, security, and ease of use. Additionally, our new platform offers advanced features, improved interoperability and streamlined integration with electronic health record systems. Data integration can save valuable time and reduce administrative burden while minimizing risk of errors.

ACHQC surgeons were introduced to our new registry upgrades at the QI Summit.

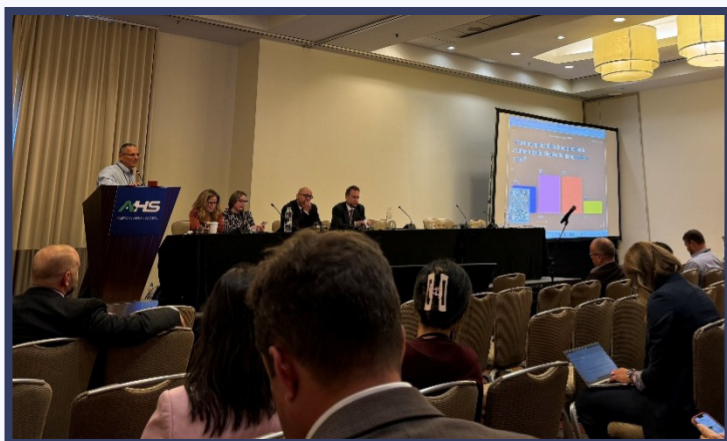
# PEER-TO-PEER ENGAGEMENT

**Surgical Conferences** ACHQC is the leading source of high quality, clinically relevant real-world data on hernia surgery. ACHQC surgeons frequently speak at clinical conferences worldwide, sharing meaningful data-driven analyses and our collective real-world experiences.

*Dr. Courtney Collins presented "Understanding the Interplay of Healthcare Inequities and Hernia Surgery Outcomes - What Can I Do to Optimize Patient Outcomes?" at the ACHQC session during the 2024 American Hernia Society meeting.*



*Dr. Michael Reinhorn discussed "Updates From the Opioid Reduction Task Force - How to Optimize Postoperative Patient Care With Opioid Reduction Strategies" with attendees of the ACHQC session at American Hernia Society Meeting in Chicago, IL.*



## 6TH ANNUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SUMMIT

ACHQC welcomed 90 attendees gathering in Denver, CO to learn from and network with highly engaged hernia specialists at our 6th annual QI Summit. The educational program featured data-driven sessions on healthcare disparities, managing challenging cases, and optimizing outcomes.

Attendees surveyed rated the program as “Excellent,” with 100% of respondents rating the quality of presentations as “Excellent” or “Good.” Highlights from the 2024 ACHQC Quality Improvement Summit are available on the ACHQC [website](#).



*“This is a very efficient and organized meeting where I can get a lot of updated or latest information which I really appreciate. The CME added this year was also great.”*



## CONGRATULATIONS TO AVIKA SHARMA – 2024 ACHQC RESIDENT & FELLOW RESEARCH GRANT RECIPIENT



During the ACHQC QI Summit, we were thrilled to announce Avika Sharma as the recipient of the 2024 ACHQC Resident & Fellow Research Grant. Mentored by Dr. Robert Yates, Ms Sharma will present her work on “Comparison of pre- and postoperative patient reported quality of life outcomes in symptomatic and asymptomatic patients undergoing elective inguinal hernia repair” during the 2025 QI Summit.

### **Avika Sharma**

*Medical Assistant & Prospective Medical Student, University of Washington*

## PEER REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

One of the foremost benefits of the wealth of data collected within our Registry is our ability to support data-driven research. Each year, our seasoned team of biostatisticians conducts extensive analyses of numerous questions that may be answered through examination of real-world Registry data. ACHQC encourages robust review of findings which support meaningful improvements that may impact patient outcomes. In 2024, these efforts resulted in the publication of 40 peer-reviewed papers in high-impact journals, bringing the total number of peer-reviewed publications utilizing data collected by ACHQC to 183 since the Collaborative’s inception.

The [complete bibliography](#) is available on the ACHQC website.

## SPOTLIGHT: QUANTIFYING THE VALUE OF THE ACHQC

### A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

In collaboration with representatives from the US Food & Drug Administration, analyses were performed to determine the potential value created by the ACHQC for regulatory decision making by comparing use of the Registry data to conventional studies which might have been conducted had the Registry not existed. Both time and cost required to perform the studies were evaluated. **The results were compelling – compared to traditional postmarket studies, use of ACHQC data can result in cost savings of millions of dollars and time savings from 3-4.8 years.**

**CONCLUSIONS:** *Compared to traditional postmarket studies, use of ACHQC data can result in cost and time savings when used for appropriate regulatory decisions.*



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# THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS

ACHQC invites individuals, corporations, foundations, and healthcare organizations involved in managing hernia and abdominal wall diseases to join us in our mission to improve patient care. Many generously dedicate countless hours of their time, which is invaluable, while others provide financial support for our operations. We extend our heartfelt thanks and recognition to all who have contributed to and supported us in 2024.

## FOUNDATION PARTNERS

Our Foundation Partners provide invaluable support in advancing our mission to enhance patient care and make a positive impact on patients' lives. Through their generosity, ACHQC is able to offer free access to our Registry to hernia care teams nationwide, along with free educational programs and resources to patients and their care teams.



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ACHQC appreciates these individual donors for their 2024 contributions. Their generous donations and shared commitment to improve abdominal core health strengthens our Collaborative.

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