

# QC VISION

The Official Quarterly Newsletter of Abdominal Core Health Quality Collaborative



## WHAT'S IN OUR LATEST ISSUE:

- **Meeting Highlights: 2025 ACHQC Quality Improvement Summit**
- **Verified Surgeon of Quality Program**
- **2025 ACHQC Resident & Fellow Research Grant**
- **ACHQC Registry Tips & Resources**
  - **Pre-filled Forms**
  - **Entering Recurrent or New Operations**
- **Call for Committee Members**
- **Follow ACHQC on Social Media**
- **Thank You to Our Foundation Partners**

## MEETING HIGHLIGHTS: 2025 ACHQC QUALITY IMPROVEMENT SUMMIT

Thank you to all who attended the 7th annual ACHQC Quality Improvement Summit in February! We received exceptional feedback after the meeting and are looking forward to returning to Denver in 2026 for the next QI Summit. For those unable to attend, we have assembled a list of key points from each session on the ACHQC website's [QI Summit web page](#), along with many of the presentations.

### SESSION 1

#### Setting the Stage for Optimum Outcomes: Preoperative Optimization

In this session we had several lectures that focused on preoperative optimization and attempting to consider all stakeholders in these conversations. We learned how we can meet patients' where they are at and avoid assigning hard cut offs to preoperative optimization goals. In doing so, we can avoid making these unattainable, while still improving our patients health and outcomes. Several speakers discussed the importance of considering the patient's perspective and understanding the actual difference in outcomes one can expect from various preoperative optimization strategies.

## SESSION 2

### Mentoring Future Surgeons: How Can We Optimize Post-graduate Hernia Training?

This session was highlighted by a robust discussion on the pros and cons of abdominal wall reconstruction fellowships. There was general consensus that performing advanced reconstructive techniques was outside the purview of a general surgery residency training. However, there was considerable debate as to whether the current case volume cutoffs and the specific types of cases were justified and high enough. Overall, the group thought that basic hernia training could be a tremendous opportunity to focus on in general surgery training.

## SESSION 3

### Measuring What Matters: Inguinal Hernias

Inguinal hernias remain one of the most common procedures our collaborative performs. There was discussion as to the best mesh, the rates of chronic pain, and improvements in quality of life and outcomes for repairing asymptomatic contra-lateral inguinal hernias.

## SESSION 4

### Improving Outcomes Through Mastery: Routine Hernias

In this session we learned that the use drains is likely very procedure and surgeon specific and the recommendations largely are based on surgeon discretion. We also saw an interesting novel approach to repairing umbilical hernias and rectus diastasis in a cost-effective manner.

## SESSION 5

### Group Breakout Session

Our breakout sessions resulted in passionate discussions and excellent recommendations for our Collaborative. Some of these including asking for new innovation in heavyweight mesh materials, adding decision regret to our patient reported outcomes, acknowledging the confusion and overall challenging results of parastomal hernia, and reconsidering the role of prophylactic mesh placement. These are all areas the ACHQC plans to investigate this year.

## SESSION 6

### Innovative Techniques to Navigate Challenges: How to Get Out of Trouble

Lectures focused on ways to mitigate risk and get out of trouble. Some of the highlights included best practices for thromboprophylaxis in complex AWR, the role of surgeon age in hernia repair outcomes, and tips and tricks for operating on obese patients while performing open AWR procedures.



Dr. Aldo Fafaj presents on the topic of ventral hernia repair in cirrhotic patients.



Dr. Megan Melland-Smith presents "The Argument for More Widespread Fellowship Training in AWR/Hernia".

## SESSION 7

### Mountains of Opportunity: Expanding Networks for Quality Improvement in Abdominal Core Health

We learned from our newest international collaborative members the challenges and rewards for bringing the ACHQC to their respective countries, Brazil and Canada. The legal, financial, and data entry burden were all reviewed and highlighted with best practices and lessons learned for future international growth of the ACHQC.



Dr. Todd Harris shares how to leverage the ACHQC's Verified Surgeon of Quality program to market your practice.

## SESSION 8

### Practice Management: Billing & Coding

One of our private practice surgeons shared an incredible journey of how he utilizes the ACHQC to grow his market share through distinguishing himself as a unique surgeon that cares about data and patient outcomes. We also learned how the new billing codes are affecting hernia size reporting in the ACHQC.

## SESSION 9

### Research & RCTs

Embedded clinical trials continue to be a mainstay of our Collaborative. In this session, several new clinical trials were reviewed with a focus on trial design and interpretation of the data to improve your patients outcomes.

## SESSION 10

### Foregut

Our summit ended with a thorough evaluation of our hiatal hernia outcomes. We learned several tips and tricks on how to perform optimal paraesophageal hernia repair from one of our high volume surgeons. In addition, we saw presentations that evaluated the way to define a clinically significant hiatal hernia recurrence, and the design of a novel RCT on mesh versus pledgets for large hiatal hernia repairs.



Dr. Mike Rosen shares opening and closing remarks.

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Great meeting; one of the best of the year.

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# VERIFIED SURGEON OF QUALITY PROGRAM

The ACHQC Verified Surgeon of Quality program was established to recognize and distinguish participating surgeons for their dedication to improving the quality and value of health care for patients who suffer from hernia disease and diseases of the abdominal wall or abdominal core. Improved quality and value are realized through consistent data entry in the ACHQC Registry and participation in ACHQC's continuous quality improvement programs.

ACHQC leadership believes surgeons focusing on quality improvement will perform at their highest level. We hope that through this verification program, you will be recognized by your peers and broader network for your dedication to improving the quality and value of patient care in your community.

## As an ACHQC Verified Surgeon of Quality, you will be:

- Showcasing your commitment to providing quality health care and delivering value to patients through your participation in the ACHQC Registry and its continuous quality improvement programs
- Distinguishing yourself from other surgeons for being dedicated to providing quality care
- Enhancing your credibility among peers and your broader network
- Signaling your readiness and dedication to improving outcomes for patients

## You will receive:

- Recognition on ACHQC's [Verified Surgeon of Quality web page](#)
- Media kit -- PDF certificate and digital badge

**ACHQC Verified Surgeon of Quality program is open to all ACHQC surgeon members entering data in 2025.**

**JOIN OR RENEW  
YOUR MEMBERSHIP**



## 2025 ACHQC RESIDENT & FELLOW RESEARCH GRANT



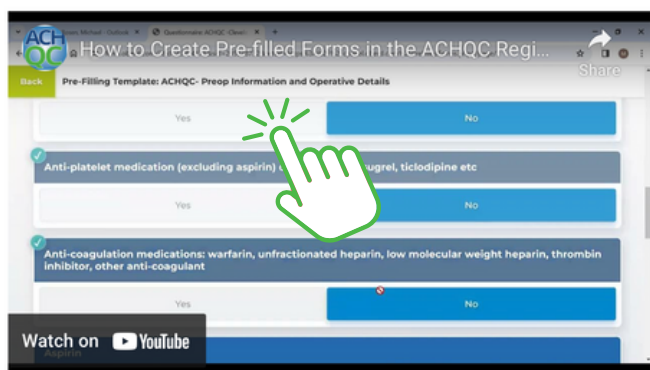
ACHQC is pleased to announce that the recipient of the 2025 ACHQC Resident & Fellow Research Grant is Nancy Ly, MD. Dr. Ly is a PGY-3 resident at Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine, and her ACHQC surgeon mentor is Dr. Michael Rosen. Dr. Ly will present the findings of her study *"Evaluating the Effects of Surgical Site Infections on Patients with Different Socioeconomic Statuses: A Mixed Method Study"* at the 2026 ACHQC Quality Improvement Summit.

# ACHQC REGISTRY TIPS & RESOURCES

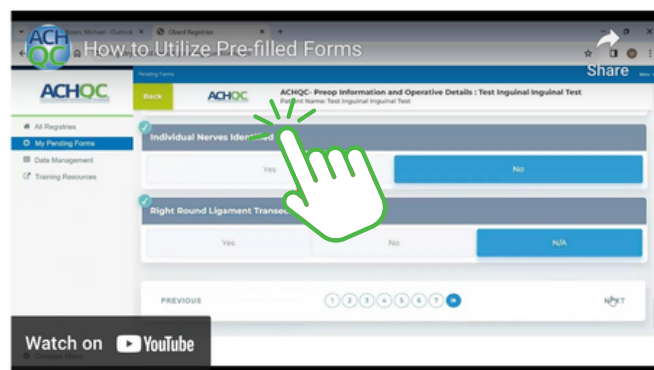
## Pre-filled Forms

A great feature in the new registry platform is the ability to create pre-filled forms. Utilizing pre-filled forms for routine operations can save you time and make data entry a breeze. Instructional videos for how to create and launch pre-filled forms are available on the [ACHQC website](#) and the [OBERD training site](#). You may also click on the images below.

How to Create Pre-filled Forms in the ACHQC Registry



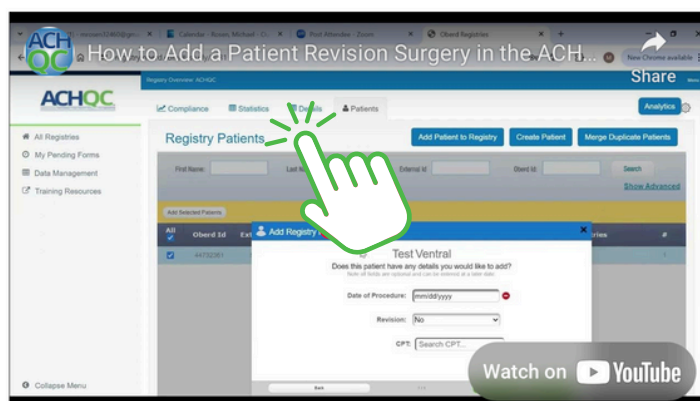
How to Utilize Pre-filled Forms



## Entering Recurrent or New Operations

One big advantage of the new registry platform is that we can now enter repairs for recurrent hernias or new hernias in the original patient record. The OBERD system refers to these entries as 'Revisions.' In either case, you just have to follow a couple of simple steps to withdraw the patient from the current follow up track and re-enter the updated CPT code/hernia type. Detailed video instructions on how to do this can be found on the ACHQC website, the OBERD training site, or by clicking on the image below.

How to Add a Patient Revision Surgery in the ACHQC Registry



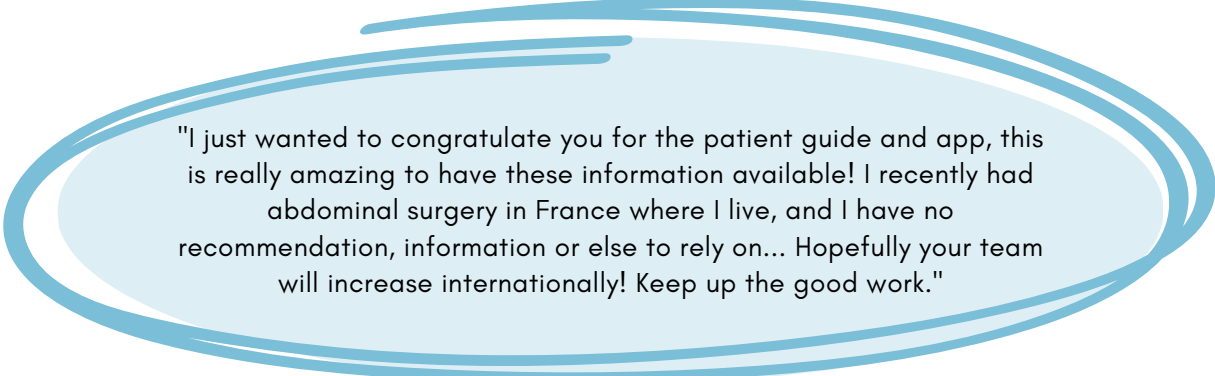
ACHQC has created a variety of informational guides and videos to help you navigate the new registry platform efficiently and effectively. All of this information is available on the ACHQC website and the OBERD training site.



# CALL FOR COMMITTEE MEMEBERS

## ACHQC Patient Engagement & Advocacy Committee

Know a patient who's had hernia or abdominal wall surgery and wants to make a difference? We're seeking passionate individuals who wish to share their experiences and help improve care for others. [Click here](#) to learn more about our Committee. If you have someone in mind, please speak with them and refer interested patients to Harriet Schwartzman ([harrieteachqc.org](mailto:harrieteachqc.org)).



"I just wanted to congratulate you for the patient guide and app, this is really amazing to have these information available! I recently had abdominal surgery in France where I live, and I have no recommendation, information or else to rely on... Hopefully your team will increase internationally! Keep up the good work."

## ACHQC Opioid Task Force

The ACHQC Opioid Task Force is open to new members interested in efforts to educate physicians and patients on responsible use of perioperative opioids following hernia surgery. [Click here](#) to learn more about the committee and its opioid reduction efforts. Contact committee co-chairs, Dr. Micki Reinhorn ([mreinhorn@bostonhernia.com](mailto:mreinhorn@bostonhernia.com)) or Dr. Clayton Petro ([petro@ccf.org](mailto:petro@ccf.org)), to join.

## ACHQC Quality Improvement Committee

The ACHQC QI Committee is seeking new members to join this engaging and energetic committee. The QI Committee is passionate about improving the care for the patients we treat every day and would love your input to help improve the care delivered to hernia patients across the country! To join the Committee contact Dr. Luke Beffa ([beffa@ccf.org](mailto:beffa@ccf.org)).

## ACHQC Data Integration Committee

The Data Integration Committee is looking for new members who are interested in designing quality outcome reports. To date, the committee has been charged with updating the questions in the registry to capture pertinent information from surgeons and patients. In addition to tracking surgeon outcomes by case volume and by procedure, we are also tracking long term recurrence rates. We have also added sections of data that include treatment of sports hernias and chronic groin pain. We are looking for anyone who is interested in assisting in improving the database input and extraction metrics. An interest in data informatics is a plus but not necessary. Contact Dr. Bryan Ellis ([bryan\\_ellis@trihealth.com](mailto:bryan_ellis@trihealth.com)) to join.

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# THANK YOU TO OUR FOUNDATION PARTNERS



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