



Division of Education

June 21, 2013

**Re: Fundamentals of Laparoscopic Surgery (FLS) and Important Funding Changes**

**As you know, the FLS program is one of the most extensively evaluated educational programs providing objective, validated assessment of technical skills fundamental to the practice of laparoscopic surgery.** FLS was developed under the auspices of SAGES, and is now a joint-venture between SAGES and ACS.

**FLS has become the standard educational program for laparoscopic training and has been eagerly embraced by many surgical specialists outside general surgery and across the globe.** FLS certification ensures surgeons have demonstrated the cognitive and technical skill sets fundamental to the practice of laparoscopic surgery. Beginning with the 2009-10 academic year, successful completion of the FLS exam became required by the American Board of Surgery for admission to the ABS Qualifying Exam in Surgery. In the 2012-13 academic year, 99% of the chief surgical residents in ACGME-accredited general surgery residency programs successfully completed the FLS exam.

**The majority of residents taking the FLS exam did so through support from the Covidien Educational Fund which officially ends December 2013.** All test materials and vouchers have now been awarded to eligible programs. Unexpired vouchers may continue to be redeemed for testing and programs eligible for a complimentary onsite testing visit may schedule one to take place before December 31, 2013. FLS course slides and videos are also available for download at [www.flsprogram.org/publicfiles/](http://www.flsprogram.org/publicfiles/). These can be used for a 1-2 hour lecture on FLS as a supplement to the online curriculum. They should not substitute for the residents studying the online curriculum or practicing the skills. Use of the slides is limited to training your surgical residents as part of their regular surgical educational curriculum.

**The costs to manage the FLS program are considerable and there has been great effort to keep fees as low as possible.** Costs include updating content while making year-round testing available nationally and maintaining the high-stakes examination rigor, security and reliability. Despite this, in comparison to other similar educational programs, FLS is an excellent value. FLS is delivered on a budget-neutral basis and does not generate profit for either SAGES or ACS.

**Moving forward, due to the expiration of the Covidien grant, all costs of FLS must now be covered by those purchasing the materials and test vouchers in order that this be a sustainable program.** Prices can be discounted by purchasing Educational Packages for groups of three, and having the purchase made by a member of ACS or SAGES. All test vouchers carry a twelve-month expiration.

|  | ACS or/SAGES Member discount | Non-member rate |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Individual FLS Package –<br>1 online account + 1 voucher | \$595                        | \$755           |
| Educational Package –                                    |                              |                 |

|  |                      |                      |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|
| 3 online accounts + 3 vouchers           | \$1,595 (\$532 each) | \$1,995 (\$665 each) |
| Online Access Only –<br>1 online account | \$120                | \$150                |

We encourage you to share this information with your colleagues. For ordering information or if you have any questions, please visit [www.flsprogram.org](http://www.flsprogram.org) , or, contact the FLS program office at 310-437-0544, ext. 137, or email to [fls@sages.org](mailto:fls@sages.org) .

Sincerely,

Gerald M. Fried, MD FACS  
SAGES President and  
ACS/SAGES FLS Joint Committee Co-chair

Lenworth M. Jacobs, Jr., MD FACS  
ACS/SAGES FLS Joint Committee Co-chair