



Association of Women Surgeons

35 E. Wacker Drive, Suite 850, Chicago, IL 60601 | 312-224-2575 f: 312-644-8557 | WomenSurgeons.org

The Association of Women Surgeons is Important. . .and here's why

Mission Statement

The mission of the Association of Women Surgeons is to inspire, encourage and enable women surgeons to realize their professional and personal goals.

Goals

- *To promote professional growth and development,*
- *To enhance and facilitate interaction among women surgeons throughout the world,*
- *To foster an environment supportive of personal values and individual diversity, and*
- *To advance the highest standards of competence and ethical behavior.*

Current Statistics

1. The number of women who are general surgeons has consistently increased over the past 30 years, from 3.6% in 1980 to 8.8% in 1995 and 13.6% in 2007. While 10% of general surgery residents were women in 1980, this number increased to 21% in 1995 and stood at 40% in 2010.
2. Currently there are six women Chairs of Departments of Surgery in the United States, one of whom is serving as an interim chair.
3. Women constitute 8% of Professors, 13% of Associate Professors and 26% of Assistant Professors of Surgery.
4. The 100-year-old American College of Surgeons (ACS) has had:
 - a. Four women Chairs of the Board of Governors,
 - b. Three women recipients of the Distinguished Service Award,
 - c. Two women Presidents, and
 - d. One woman Division Director.
 - e. The first woman surgeon to chair the Board of Regents was just elected in October 2012.
 - f. No woman has served as the Executive Director of ACS.
5. The American Surgical Association has never had a woman president and currently has no women as Council members.

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Common Questions

1. Why do we need AWS?

- a. AWS addresses the unique challenges that women surgeons face such as:
 - Balancing family issues with the demands of a surgical career, including when to have children;
 - Pay and promotion equity issues; and
 - The lack of women in academic leadership positions.
- b. AWS has been a leader in providing mentorship at all surgical levels to both women and men.
 - The ***AWS Pocket Mentor*** was first published in 1993. Since then four updates have been published and nearly 50,000 books have been distributed to men and women medical students, residents, program directors, department chairs, libraries and schools. The *AWS Pocket Mentor* is also distributed at other medical conferences.
- c. The ACS recognizes AWS with a Governor position, as it does with other specialty organizations, thus communicating that we serve an important constituency.

2. There isn't an all-men's organization, so why should we support an all women's organization?

- There isn't a need for a "male surgeon" organization since most of the surgical organizations are, as noted in the statistics above, comprised primarily of men with men in almost all the leadership positions.
- AWS membership is open to men, as well as women.
- All AWS resources, including our popular *Pocket Mentor* and family leave policies, are accessible to everyone on our Website.

For additional information about the Association of Women Surgeons, member programs and benefits, please check out our Website at **WomenSurgeons.org**.

References

1. Physician Characteristics and Distribution in the US, 2009. Chicago, IL: American Medical Association; 2009.
2. FREIDA Online. 2011. (Accessed January 6, 2012, at <https://freida.ama-assn.org/Freida/user/specStatisticsSearch.do?method=viewDetail&spcCd=440&pageNumber=2>.)
3. Rowley B, Baldwin DC, Jr., McGuire M. Selected Characteristics of Graduate Medical Education in the United States. *JAMA* 1991;266:933-43.
4. Distribution of U.S. Medical School Faculty by Sex, Rank, and Department. 2010. (Accessed January 6, 2012, at <https://www.aamc.org/download/169810/data/10table13.pdf>.)