

## ***Information Statement***

# **Commitment to Excellence: Maintaining Skills and Knowledge Through Lifelong Learning**

*This Information Statement was developed as an educational tool based on the opinion of the authors. It is not a product of a systematic review. Readers are encouraged to consider the information presented and reach their own conclusions.*

Every orthopaedic surgeon has an ethical and professional obligation to stay abreast of the accelerating knowledge expansion occurring in the musculoskeletal sciences. The covenant that exists between surgeon and patient, and between the profession and society, requires the acceptance of this obligation. The rate of growth of scientific knowledge and clinical experience in our specialty places an extraordinary responsibility on each Academy Fellow to maintain his or her knowledge base.

However, the Academy believes that each orthopaedist must develop his or her approach to knowledge maintenance in an organized and explicit manner to assure that it addresses content in all areas in which care is provided. Moreover, specific areas of study identified by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education as essential to maintaining physician competence should be used as an overall plan of study. They include:

- a. Patient Care that is compassionate, appropriate and effective for the treatment of health problems and the promotion of health
- b. Medical Knowledge about established and evolving biomedical, clinical and cognate (e.g. epidemiological and social-behavioral) sciences and the application of this knowledge to patient care
- c. Practice-Based Learning and Improvement that involves investigation and evaluation of their own patient care, appraisal and assimilation of scientific evidence, and improvements in patient care
- d. Interpersonal and Communication Skills that result in effective information exchange and teaming with patients, their families and other health professionals
- e. Professionalism, as manifested through a commitment to carrying out professional responsibilities, adherence to ethical principles, and sensitivity to a diverse patient population
- f. Systems-Based Practice, as manifested by actions that demonstrate an awareness of and responsiveness to the larger context and system of health care and the ability to effectively call on system resources to provide care that is of optimal value.

For more information on these "six-competencies," see [www.acgme.org](http://www.acgme.org).

In addition to these six competencies, the Academy believes that Surgical Skills, that result in competent effective surgical care of patients with disorders of the musculoskeletal system, is a seventh core competency for orthopedic surgeons with a surgical practice.

As an organization devoted to the education and continuing professional development of orthopaedic surgeons and others, the Academy makes available current, comprehensive, specialized educational materials to enhance their knowledge and to facilitate the provision of improved patient care. The Academy's commitment to excellence in education is enduring and substantive. Every orthopaedist should make a similar commitment.

©March 1991 American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons®. Reviewed May 1996. Revised August 2003 and September 2007. Reviewed June 2012.

This material may not be modified without the express written permission of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons.

Information Statement 1001

For additional information, contact the Public Relations Department at 847-384-4036.