

CARDIOTHORACIC
GENERAL
MINIMAL INVASIVE
PEDIATRIC HEART
PEDIATRIC
PLASTIC & RECONSTRUCTIVE
SURGICAL ONCOLOGY
THORACIC
TRANSPLANT
TRAUMA & CRITICAL CARE
VASCULAR



THE STITCH

The Newsletter of the
Department of Surgery



AUGUSTA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL COLLEGE
OF GEORGIA

June 2026



Chatter with the Chair

As we close out June, I'm struck by how many moments this month reflect the strength, momentum, and shared purpose of our department. Across our clinical programs, educational mission, and scholarly work, you continue to demonstrate what it means to deliver excellence with consistency and heart. We celebrate our graduating chiefs and welcome our new interns. Meanwhile, let's celebrate some Departmental accomplishments.

One highlight was seeing **Dr. Omar ElShazly** represent our institution as a Grand Rounds speaker at the Houston Methodist Department of Surgery. His reflections on perseverance, adaptation, and the long arc of surgical growth resonated deeply. His message—that experience and exposure shape us into the surgeons we become—felt especially timely as we welcome new trainees and continue mentoring the next generation.

We also celebrated a major milestone for our cardiovascular team with the completion of the 500th **Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR)** at Wellstar MCG Health. This achievement reflects years of dedication from a multidisciplinary team committed to delivering advanced, lifesaving care close to home. Milestones like this remind us that innovation is not an abstract concept—it's a daily commitment to improving the lives of our patients.

Another point of pride this month was the ribbon cutting for the **new Wellstar Transplant Services facility in Atlanta**, a meaningful expansion of access for patients and families navigating complex transplant care. The collaboration and leadership behind this effort speak to the vision and teamwork that define our department.

We are also thrilled to welcome **Dr. Todd Thurston** to our Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery faculty. His expertise in craniofacial and reconstructive surgery strengthens our clinical offerings and enriches the educational experience for our trainees. Please join me in extending a warm welcome as he begins this next chapter with us.

Our academic mission continues to shine as well, with impactful publications from our faculty and trainees in *JAMA Surgery* and the *Journal of the Association for Surgical Education*. These contributions reflect the intellectual curiosity and rigor that drive our department forward.

Finally, we are pleased to welcome our incoming Army residents, who bring talent, discipline, and a commitment to service that enriches our training environment. Their arrival is a reminder of the responsibility we carry as educators and mentors. Celebrate the journey, honor the leadership, and embrace the future.

Again, congratulations to our chief residents on their graduation! Thank you to the entire department for your continued dedication across every corner of our mission. The work you do—seen and unseen—builds the foundation for achievements of teaching our residents. I'm grateful for each of you and energized by what we are accomplishing together.

"The training of a surgeon is not merely the acquisition of skills, but the forging of character, resilience, and unwavering commitment to healing."

— Paul Kalanithi, M.D.

William D Jordan, Jr., MD
Professor and Chair,
Department of Surgery
Medical College of Georgia
Surgeon in Chief

CONGRATULATIONS

MAKING OF A SURGEON JUNE 3RD, 2026



Dr. Omar ElShazly was invited to serve as a Grand Rounds speaker at the Houston Methodist Department of Surgery. During his presentation, he shared insights from his professional journey as a Vascular and Endovascular Surgeon, emphasizing the value of perseverance, continuous growth, and adaptation within the U.S. healthcare system.

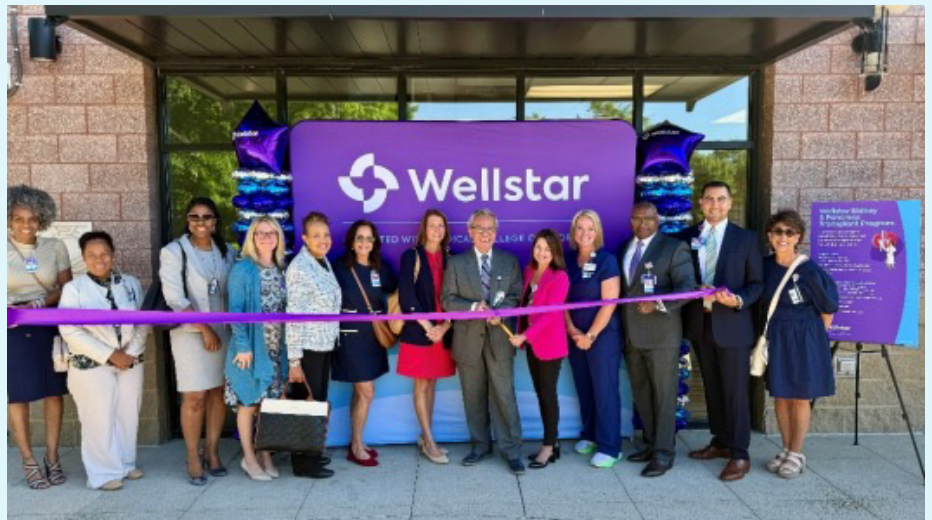
Pictured at the Houston Methodist Department of Surgery Grand Rounds are Dr. Lillian Gaber, Dr. Omar ElShazly, the invited Grand Rounds Speaker, and Dr. Ahmed Osama Gaber

RIBBON CUTTING WELLSTAR TRANSPLANT SERVICES, ATLANTA

This new location represents an important step forward in increasing access to specialized transplant care and supporting patients closer to home.



Dr. Angello Lin



Christina Wiggins, Angello Lin, Ralph Turner, and colleagues celebrated the ribbon cutting of the new Wellstar Transplant Services facility.

500TH TRANSCATHETER AORTIC VALVE REPLACEMENT

At Wellstar MCG Health, the 500th Transcatheter Aortic Valve Replacement (TAVR) procedure has been completed, marking a significant achievement for our cardiovascular team. This minimally invasive, lifesaving treatment for severe aortic stenosis involves replacing the diseased aortic valve to help restore blood flow and improve heart function and daily activity. These milestones are made possible by the trust of our community and the expertise, teamwork, and dedication of our cardiovascular specialists delivering accessible advanced, world-class care.

Medical staff team led by Dr. Richard Lee, Dr. Christine Mills, Dr. Deya Alkhatib, Dr. Wael Aljaroudi, Jenn Davis, NP, and Nancy Doby, RN.



WELCOME

NEW FACULTY



Dr. Todd Thurston - Associate Professor of Plastics & Reconstructive Surgery, Cleft and Craniofacial Surgery

The Department of Surgery is pleased to welcome Dr. Todd Thurston to the Faculty of the Division of Plastic Surgery. Dr. Thurston joins our institution

following his role at Erlanger Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he practiced as a Plastic, Reconstructive, and Craniofacial Surgeon. He brings extensive expertise in reconstructive and craniofacial surgery, along with a strong commitment to patient care, education, and clinical excellence. We are excited to have Dr. Thurston join our Clinical team and look forward to many contributions he will make to our department, trainees, and the patients we serve.

NEW RESIDENTS

Our MCG General Surgery Residency is excited to welcome five residents from the Eisenhower Army Medical Center. While the residents have rotated at our site in recent years, they will be completing their Surgery training with our program. Welcome to the team!



David Chow
PGY-5



Tiffany Kippenberger
PGY-4



Thomas McKinley
PGY-4



Matthew Dellen
PGY-3



Garrison Hughes
PGY-2

PUBLICATIONS

- Raval Mehul, Yao Tian, Willemijn Schäfer, Salva N. Balbale, Mallory N. Perez, **Martha-Conley E. Ingram**, Alison Lehane, Charesa et al. **Implementation and Effectiveness of an Enhanced Recovery Protocol for Children Undergoing Surgery: The ENRICH-US Stepped-Wedge Cluster-Randomized Trial.** *JAMA Surg.* Online May 13, 2026. doi: 10.1001/jamasurg.2026.1382 <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamasurgery/fullarticle/2848846>
- **Gabrielle Moore**, Dalton Hegeholtz, Ting Sun, M. Libby Weaver, Erin P. Ward, **Erika Simmerman Mabes**, Kshama Jaiswal, **What do entrustable professional activities really tell us? Evaluating narrative feedback in general surgery: Global Surgical Education – Journal of the Association for Surgical Education** <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s44186-026-00542-2>

138TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOUTHERN SURGICAL ASSOCIATION

DECEMBER 6-9



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