



DR. GIFTY KWAKYE

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION SPOTLIGHT

GLOBAL COLORECTAL SURGERY EDUCATION INITIATIVE (GCSEI): *EMPOWERING SUBSPECIALTY SURGICAL TRAINING IN GHANA THROUGH NATIONAL VISION AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP*

The *Global Colorectal Surgery Education Initiative (GCSEI)* is a U.S.-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit committed to transforming access to specialized colorectal care through sustainable, locally led training programs. Founded and chaired by Dr. Gifty Kwakye (University of Michigan), its Board includes Dr. Lyen Huang (University of Utah), Prof. Jonathan Laryea (University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences), and Prof. Ann Lowry (University of Minnesota). Together, they work in close partnership with Ghanaian educators and health leaders to build surgical capacity from the ground up.

At the heart of GCSEI's efforts is the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons (GCPS), whose visionary leadership recognized colorectal surgery as a national training priority and called on local and international collaborators to co-create a fellowship program designed for Ghana, by Ghana.

Under the guidance of GCPS Rector Prof. Richard Adanu, President Prof. Samuel Debrah, and Vice President Prof. Pius Agbenorku, Ghana's first nationally accredited colorectal surgery fellowship was launched in 2023. The program is anchored by faculty at Ghana's major teaching hospitals, including Prof. Antoinette Bediako-Bowan (Korle Bu Teaching Hospital), Prof. Joseph Yorke, and Dr. Charles Dally (Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital). Together, they are building a pipeline of homegrown colorectal surgeons equipped to lead in both clinical care and system transformation.





Fellowship Success and National Impact

The program's first graduate (2024) now leads a colorectal tumor board and clinic in Kumasi. Two additional fellows are actively in training, with plans to expand colorectal services to underserved areas like Ghana's Eastern Region. The fellowship blends in-country education, simulation, and virtual learning with U.S.-based observerships—generously supported by the American Society of Colon and Rectal Surgeons (ASCRS) and the Society of Black Colon and Rectal Surgeons (SBCRS).

GCSEI and GCPS are also addressing broader gaps in surgical education and systems development by:

- Hosting monthly didactics for trainees across Ghana and Rwanda, including radiology sessions from University of Utah faculty
- Providing 1:1 mentorship in clinical reasoning, career planning, and research, including oral exam prep led by Prof. Ann Lowry, past ASCRS President
- Facilitating quarterly site visits from U.S. faculty to provide intraoperative coaching, case reviews, ward-based teaching, and medical student mentorship
- Organizing Annual Spring Workshops featuring cadaver labs, simulation training, and multidisciplinary discussions
- Encouraging cross-cultural exchange and near-peer mentorship through visiting U.S. medical students
- Enabling fellows to join University of Michigan's weekly colorectal tumor board as observers, gaining exposure to complex multidisciplinary case management





Research and Team Capacity Building

GCSEI's commitment to academic excellence includes:

- 1:1 research mentorship with U.S. and Canadian faculty
- Funding support for fellow-led research projects through the University of Utah
- Ongoing training in study design, QI methodology, data analysis, and scientific writing
- Support for presentations at regional and international academic meetings

GCSEI has also invested in training clinics and OR nurses, endoscopy teams, stoma care nurses, and research coordinators—ensuring the entire care ecosystem is strengthened alongside surgical expertise.

Over \$100,000 worth of medical equipment and supplies has been donated to training sites to enhance surgical education and improve patient care. Contributions have included laparoscopic and open surgery tools, staplers, energy devices, simulation models, textbooks, and more.

Expanding to HPB Surgery and Inviting Broader Involvement

With the success of the colorectal fellowship, GCPS and GCSEI are now partnering to develop a hepatobiliary (HPB) surgery training pathway, addressing another critical subspecialty gap. Early didactics and curriculum development are already underway.

While some fellowship sites now have functioning colorectal tumor boards, others do not. There is a growing need for remote participation and mentorship from radiologists, pathologists, radiation oncologists, and medical oncologists. Fellows benefit enormously from exposure to multidisciplinary decision-making—an area where virtual engagement can have immediate impact.



Get Involved

We welcome colorectal surgeons, general surgeons, endoscopists, minimally invasive surgeons, radiologists, pathologists, oncologists, and educators who are interested in:

- Teaching virtually or in-person
- Donating time, expertise, equipment, or training resources
- Supporting multidisciplinary tumor board development
- Traveling to Ghana to provide bedside or intraoperative coaching
- Offering financial contributions to sustain fellow education, supplies, and site expansion

For more information and to donate to GCSEI, please visit:

[Global Colorectal Surgery Education Initiative \(GCSEI\)](http://www.ganaphysicians.org)

