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Join us in New Orleans for the AGS 2018 Annual Conference

Feb. 17-18, 2018 • Hyatt Centric French Quarter, New Orleans

AGS is excited to be hosting our 2018 Annual Conference in one of the top 10 most visited cities in the United States - New Orleans! The Hyatt Centric French Quarter is located among historic sights including Jackson Square and the French Market, and near live music spots on Bourbon Street. Enjoy a street car ride or stroll down the historic streets of New Orleans to see classic architecture and experience all the Big Easy has to offer.

In addition to the educational sessions offered during the conference, we will elect and install officers for 2018-2020, enjoy a Mardi Gras Lunch Party with our exhibitors, and give you plenty of free time to explore the city.

Topics

- Coding Pitfalls in Ambulatory Surgery Centers
- GI Practice Management, Ancillary Opportunities in GI
- Hepatitis B
- Management of Achalasia

- Management of Refractory IBD
- Pancreaticobiliary

Faculty

- David Fettig, MD, Birmingham Gastroenterology
- Steve Hanauer, MD, Professor of Medicine, Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
- Phillip Henderson, DO, Clinical Instructor of Medicine, USA College of Medicine
- Reed Hogan, MD, GI Associates and Endoscopy Center
- Mouen Khashab, MD, Associate Professor of Medicine and Director of Therapeutic Endoscopy, Johns Hopkins Hospital, Division of Gastroenterology and Hepatology
- Kenneth Sigman, MD, Birmingham Gastroenterology Associates
- Kristin Vaughn, CPC, Ask Mueller Consulting, LLC



Accommodations

Reserve a room at the Hyatt Centric French Quarter online at www.tinyurl.com/2018AGSReservations or call 888-421-1442 and ask for the Alabama Gastroenterological Society room block. Rates begin at \$229 per night and are valid for three days before and three days after the conference based on availability. The room block expires Jan. 24, 2018, but will likely sell out before that date.

Registration

Register for the conference online at www.tinyurl.com/AGS2018 or use the form on page 2. 

AGS 2018 Annual Conference

Feb. 17-18, 2018

Hyatt Centric French Quarter
New Orleans



www.alagastro.org



2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REGISTRATION FORM

Name _____ MD DO CRNP PA PharmD Medical Science Liaison*
 Resident/Fellow Student Other _____

Practice Name _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ Fax _____ E-mail _____

Office Manager _____ Office Manager's E-mail _____

Dietary Needs _____ First time attendee? (check if yes)

FEES (After Feb. 9 add \$100)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AGS Physician Member or Out of State Physician \$375 | <input type="checkbox"/> Physician Nonmember \$475 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> AGS Associate Member or Out of State Non Physician Clinician \$275 | <input type="checkbox"/> Associate Nonmember \$375 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retiree - \$150 | <input type="checkbox"/> Resident - Free |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Science Liaison* \$475 | <input type="checkbox"/> Student - Free |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Practice Manager \$150 | |

*The medical science liaison's company must be a registered vendor at the conference. Contact Jennifer Hayes for details.

_____ Total number of adults attending reception

Guest Name(s): _____

ONLINE REGISTRATION

Go to www.tinyurl.com/AGS2018 to register online.

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If you have special needs or need assistance, please contact Jennifer Hayes, at (334) 954-2500 or JHayes@alamedical.org.

PAYMENT

Credit Card: VISA MasterCard American Express Check made payable to AGS

Cardholder Name _____ E-mail address for receipt _____

Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____

Billing Address _____ City, State ZIP _____

Signature _____ Amount: \$ _____

MAIL REGISTRATION FORM AND PAYMENT TO

AGS Annual Conference | Attn. Jennifer Hayes | PO Box 1900 | Montgomery, AL 36102-1900 | Fax (334) 269-5200

Gastroenterology, GI Surgery at UAB rank high in *U.S. News & World Report*

alabamanewscenter.com

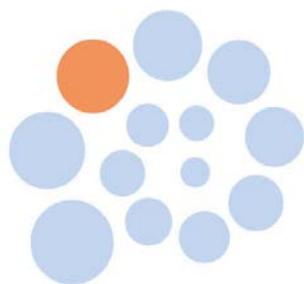
According to the 2017-2018 Best Hospitals ranking from *U.S. News & World Report*, 10 medical specialties at UAB Hospital are ranked in the top 50 in the nation, four others including gastroenterology and GI surgery are listed as “high-performing.”

The highest-ranked specialties included nephrology, urology, diabetes and endocrinology.

Eight UAB programs moved up in the rankings. Geriatrics earned a top 50 ranking for the first time, while urology, pulmonology, cardiology, diabetes and endocrinology had the largest jumps in the rankings.

The magazine also lauds UAB for high performance in seven adult procedures including colon cancer surgery.

The complete rankings and methodology are available at <http://health.usnews.com/best-hospitals>. 



AIBD|2017

ADVANCES in INFLAMMATORY
BOWEL DISEASES

Multidisciplinary Approaches
to IBD Patient-Centered Care

AGS endorses 2017 Advances in Inflammatory Bowel Diseases conference

The Alabama Gastroenterological Society is endorsing the 2017 Advances in Inflammatory Bowel Diseases conference, the premier multi-disciplinary IBD-focused conference. **AGS members receive \$50 off the conference rate.**

Date: November 9-11, 2017

Location: Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel, Orlando, Fla.

Registration: Use promo code: A564-AL-AGS-50 at registration.

Ideally located, the Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel provides an extraordinary backdrop for business or pleasure. For the convenience of participants, a room block with a limited number of rooms has been reserved at the discounted conference rate of \$205 single/double occupancy, plus tax. This limited number of discounted rooms will be available until Oct. 9, 2017. This discounted rate is not guaranteed outside the conference dates. Reservations received after Oct. 9, 2017 or after the room block has been filled (whichever comes first) are subject to availability and prevailing hotel rates.

To reserve your room contact the Walt Disney World Dolphin Hotel reservations department at (800) 227-1500 and identify yourself as being with the 2017 Advances in IBD group. You may also [reserve a room online](#). 

Southeast Gastro raising \$18K for fight against digestive disorders

al.com

Southeast Gastro has committed to donating and raising \$18,000 this year in the fight against Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

The practice, based in the Birmingham area, is sponsoring the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, Alabama/NW Florida Chapter.

Southeast Gastro has locations at Brookwood Medical Plaza, St. Vincent's East, Shelby Physician's Center, Grandview, Blount County, Gardendale and Prattville.

About 1.6 million people nationwide,

and an estimated 32,000 in Alabama, live with Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis.

Funds from Southeast Gastro's partnership will support the Foundation's annual Take Steps Birmingham walk and Casino for a Cause events. The Take Steps Birmingham walk in April raised over \$72,000. Casino for a Cause, which benefits those living with the disorders as well as Camp Oasis, will be held on Nov. 9 at Regions Field. Sponsorships and group ticketing packages are available for pre-sale now on the [event website](#).

Miles Gresham, Southeast Gastro president, said many patients rely on the foundation's resources.



“Through our support of the Foundation, we are committed to developing and using the latest treatments and ultimately finding a cure for inflammatory bowel disease,” he said.

For more information on how to get involved with the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation, please visit the Crohn's & Colitis Foundation [website](#) or contact Emily Richter at (646) 387-2149 or erichter@crohnscolitisfoundation.org. 

FDA approves Humira biosimilar Cyltezo

Healio.com

The FDA has approved a second biosimilar to Humira. Cyltezo is an anti-TNF drug delivered by subcutaneous injection for the treatment of moderate to severe rheumatoid arthritis, psoriatic arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis, moderate to severe Crohn's disease, moderate to severe ulcerative colitis, and moderate to severe chronic plaque psoriasis in adults, and moderate to severe polyarticular juvenile idiopathic arthritis in children aged 4 years and older.

"It is not known if Cyltezo is effective

in people who stopped responding to or could not tolerate TNF-blocker medicines," according to the FDA medication guide.

The prescribing information includes warnings about serious infections and malignancy risks, including lymphoma, associated with the drug. The most common adverse reactions included infections, injection site reactions, headache and rash.

This is the second biosimilar to Humira approved by the FDA, the first being Amjevita, approved in September 2016.

The approval is based on analytical, pharmacological, non-clinical and clinical development studies showing Cyltezo is biosimilar to Humira. It is not yet commercially available and the company is engaged in patent litigation with AbbVie, according to the press release.

The company added that it will also seek approval for an auto-injector of Cyltezo, and expects the European Medicines Agency to issue an opinion on the marketing authorization application this year. 

Physician groups call on CMS to revise reimbursement, payment policies for biosimilars

healio.com

CMS recently closed its comment period for the Revisions to Payment Policies under the Physician Fee Schedule and Other Revisions to Part B for CY 2018 proposed rule. The Biosimilars Council and several physician groups submitted comments prior to the closing period and urged CMS to revise the reimbursement policy for biosimilars in Medicare Part B and to revise the current payment policy for biosimilars.

According to a release, the Biosimilars Council, a division of the Association of Accessible Medicines, noted CMS should provide unique reimbursement codes for all non-interchangeable biosimilars instead of a single payment code. This change could create substantial savings for patients and health care payers, as well as expand patient access to biosimilar medicines, the release noted.

In a second release, the Biologics Prescribers Collaborative – along with the Alliance for Patient Access, American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists, American College of Rheumatology, American Gastroenterological Association and the Coalition of State Rheumatology Organizations – urged CMS to adopt unique Healthcare Common Procedure Coding System billing codes for biosimilars medicines instead of taking a

generic approach. These physician groups noted that use of different reimbursement levels for different biosimilars will not only promote competition, but will help create a more robust market while protecting patient safety.

The comments submitted by the Biologics Prescribers Collaborative asked CMS to consider the following:

- Biosimilars are not generic drugs and CMS should not treat these as such;
- A single J-code policy does not properly recognize interchangeability;
- Grouping biosimilars of the same reference product into one J-code could create barriers for physicians to choose the most appropriate biosimilar;
- Blended reimbursement may lead to

inappropriate non-medical switching; and

- Single J-codes could reduce investment in the biosimilars market and stifle therapeutic choices.

"The current reimbursement landscape is extremely complex. Unique J-codes for biosimilars help clarify for physicians that while 'highly similar,' biosimilars of the same reference product will likely still have product differences that should be considered in clinical decision-making," Dennis R. Cryer, MD, co-convenor of the Biologics Prescribers Collaborative, said in a release. "Grouping biosimilars in one blended reimbursement rate prioritizes price above all other features and has the potential to undermine patient care and safety." 



Alabama Gastroenterological Society

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Send article submissions and comments to Charlotte Morris at cmorris@alamedical.org two weeks in advance.

Scope is printed bimonthly. Comments and letters to the editor are welcome.