

UC San Diego Orthopedic Surgeon Named New President of International Society

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Steven Garfin, MD, Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at UC San Diego Health System was named President of the International Society for the Advancement of Spine Surgery (ISASS) for 2012 to 2013.

ISASS assesses existing strategies and innovative ideas in clinical and basic sciences related to spine surgery to enhance patient care.



Steven Garfin, MD, Distinguished Professor and chair of the Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at UC San Diego Health System.

“Being named president of ISASS is an honor and a responsibility. Spinal surgery is an important part of the continuum of care for patients with spine related pains, injuries and deformities,” said Garfin, an international expert in complex spine reconstruction. “Spinal surgeons gathering from countries around the world have much to learn from, and teach, each other.”

Increasingly, insurance companies are pushing back on authorization and funding for spine care. Prior to the formation of ISASS, there was no academic group for spinal surgeons to speak on behalf of patient care as it relates solely to surgical procedures.

“Much of the research done on spine related problems is performed in collaboration with surgeons and will progress better with a like-minded specialty group where questions can be openly discussed,” said Garfin. “We need to continue to focus on the advances in the field that bring real clinical benefits to patients.”

Garfin's new position will expand awareness of UC San Diego's academic, clinical and basic science endeavors.

"As surgeons from around the world come to UC San Diego to train and study, they will hopefully take home a positive message about our programs," said Garfin.

During his one-year term as president, Garfin will focus on the following areas:

- → Continue ISASS' growth and position the society as the primary educational resource for surgeons with new technologies and innovative solutions.
- → Interact with members of the international spine surgery community to learn more about the successes and failures of new devices and techniques from patients and physicians.
- → Address the causes of lower back pain, discover new diagnostic tools and develop strategies for fusion/motion preservation treatments in spinal disorders.

The Department of Orthopaedic Surgery at UC San Diego Health System is dedicated to providing excellence in clinical care and research in musculoskeletal disorders, it is a pioneer in cartilage restoration and transplantation, and has leaders in joint replacement, hand and upper extremity surgery, trauma care, spine surgery and sports medicine.

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Media Contact: Michelle Brubaker, 619-543-6163, mubruber@ucsd.edu

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