

Kathleen Cullen Heneghan, is the Assistant Director of the Division of Education, Surgical Patient Education Program (SPEP) at the American College of Surgeons (ACS). Ms. Heneghan is responsible for the national assessment and development of patient education programs in surgery. She collaborates with surgical specialty and professional organizations to develop, implement and evaluate the surgical patient education resources including electronic, print and simulation. The Surgical Patient Education Program aims to support professionals with evidenced based education programs and empower patients with the skills and knowledge needed for full participation in care. Since joining the ACS in 2005, the program has successfully launched programs for patients and professionals on informed consent, surgical preparation, safe surgical discharge, patient safety, and how to find a surgeon and accredited treatment center. Programs to support cancer patients include patient post-operative skills training for colon cancer (ostomy kit), lung cancer, breast cancer, central line, feeding tube and wound management.

Ms. Heneghan received a Bachelor of Science in biology from Benedictine University in 1979. She obtained her Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1980 from St. Louis University Accelerated Option Program and a Master of Science in Nursing from Loyola University, Chicago. She was a Biological Based Research Fellow while completing her PhD in Nursing from University of Illinois and is currently completing a PhD in pharmacology from Rush University Graduate Medical College with a focus on pharmacologic management of pain.

Prior to the ACS, Ms. Heneghan was an Assistant Professor at Rush University College of Nursing. Her teaching responsibilities included pediatric and critical care nursing, case management, and graduate and undergraduate pharmacology. As a professor at Rush University, Ms. Heneghan received the Golden Apple Outstanding Educator Award, the Faculty Educator Award, the Clinical Nurse Mentor Award and the Clinical Excellence Award. As the Chair of the Distance Education Committee, she was responsible for the transition of the graduate nursing program to a distance learning format. During her 15 years at Rush University, Ms. Heneghan had dual positions with the medical center, serving as the Assistant Director of Research for the Pediatric Critical Services at Rush University Medical Center and Cook County Hospital Chicago, and as Clinical Nurse Specialist for the Pediatric Department.

Ms. Heneghan was also an Associate Professor for five years at Concordia University/West Suburban College of Nursing, holding teaching responsibilities and serving as Chair of the Research and Evaluation Committee where she was instrumental in improving the nursing programs pass rate from probationary status to 100%, the highest ranking in the state of Illinois.

Ms. Heneghan remains active with the American Heart Association, teaching advanced pediatric life support and continues nursing practice in pediatric and neonatal critical care.