



**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF  
OTOLARYNGOLOGY–  
HEAD AND NECK SURGERY**

## AAO-HNS ITINERANT SURGERY POLICY

The American Academy of Otolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery believes that an ethical surgeon will not perform elective surgery at a distance from the usual location where he or she operates, in a transient fashion, without personal determination of the diagnosis and the adequacy of preoperative preparation. Postoperative care should be rendered by the operating surgeon unless it is voluntarily accepted by a local otolaryngologist or *another physician who is qualified to continue this essential aspect of total surgical care.*

Itinerant surgery is defined as any surgery performed by a surgeon outside his/her community where the postoperative care is left to another physician. In some cases, a surgeon of comparable credentials may not be available, particularly in very rural areas which may require the use of an out-of-town otolaryngologist. However, habitual or frequent performance of itinerant surgery **cannot** be condoned. It is acknowledged that disaster medical relief and humanitarian medical assistance pose special circumstances for surgical care, and are not considered itinerant surgery in the strictest sense. However, in these situations, every effort should be made to comply with the position set forth in this policy, and to provide surgical care and postoperative care, in an ethically responsible manner.

It is the opinion of the American Academy of Otolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery that itinerant surgery violates the ethical relations between surgeon and patient.

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