Within this issue of Surgical Solutions, a great story unfolds. A little over one year ago, in March 2015, we held the first Department of Surgery retreat in some years. Several great ideas “bubbled up” out of that retreat, some dealing with clinical matters, some with education, and some with fostering research. One of the intriguing ideas that came out of the retreat was the hope that the Department of Surgery could provide pilot or startup funds to help faculty bring their research ideas to fruition. I want to thank those members of the Department who pushed hard on this idea, and additionally thank our Director of Surgical Research, Jonathan Brody, PhD, for making this suggestion a reality.

We have initiated a departmental mechanism that supports these grants. We call it Support of Surgery Research Activities (SSRA). In essence these are pilot grants. Several applications have been submitted to date. In this issue, you will read about the first grant, awarded to Dr. Michael Pucci, which was submitted, critiqued, approved, funded, and now been brought to fruition. With the help of many of our residents and surgical faculty, Dr. Pucci was able to focus on a very important element of general surgery—that is: safe laparoscopic cholecystectomy. This project was completed in near record time, presented at the Society of Gastrointestinal and Endoscopic Surgeons (SAGES) Annual Meeting in March 18th in Boston, and a manuscript has been submitted. The title of the manuscript is “Increasing Resident Utilization and Recognition of the Critical View of Safety During Laparoscopic Cholecystectomy: A Pilot Study from an Academic Medical Center”.

It is wonderful to see Departmental funds dispersed for such worthwhile projects. Have those projects brought to fruition, have the work accepted at a national meeting and submitted for publication. This is exactly what we had hoped.

It goes without saying that we would like to support more and more of these pilot SSRAs. We have been fortunate to be able to use dollars donated through philanthropy to help support this research mission. We need to step up our philanthropic efforts, and to call upon our grateful patients who have so generously given to help support research in the Department. These are exciting times. Hopefully more exciting times to come!