

Perry Initiative: Increasing Diversity in Orthopaedic Medicine and Research

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The Perry Initiative is a non-profit organization with the main mission to inspire young women to pursue careers in orthopaedic surgery and engineering. Women are currently underrepresented in each of these fields (4% of Orthopaedic Attending Surgeons are women¹), which is undoubtedly a disservice to the diverse orthopaedic patient population. This program is named after Dr. Jacqueline Perry (1918-2013), who was one of the first women in orthopedics. Dr. Perry left an outstanding legacy of treating patients with gait disorders due to cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, or stroke. In addition to patient care, she was also known for being an excellent educator, researcher, and author. The Perry Initiative, currently based out of the University of Delaware, was founded in 2009 by Dr. Jenni Buckley, a mechanical engineer at the University of Delaware, and Dr. Lisa Lattanza, an orthopaedic upper extremity surgeon at Yale University.



The Perry Initiative runs outreach events across the United States for women in high school, and also first and second year medical students, to increase early exposure to the field of orthopaedics. The student participants engage in modules using Sawbones, power tools, and hardware to learn about common medical and surgical procedures, such as casting, external fixation, suturing, and total knee reconstruction. During these modules, students are challenged to use an engineering mindset to determine the optimal screw placement, ex-fix positioning, etc. Students also learn from both local female engineers and orthopaedic surgeons, further highlighting the importance of collaborations between clinicians and engineers to progress medical technology, rehabilitation protocols, and ultimately patient care.

As Program Specialists for the Perry Initiative, we have had the fortunate opportunity to witness first-hand the impact this program has on young women during programs hosted at medical centers, universities, and medical device companies across the country. It has also been awesome to have such strong support from former and current members of the Penn Orthopaedics community at these events.

If you are a member of the orthopaedic community, and would like to volunteer for any future Perry Initiative events, we can always use more local volunteers. While the majority of volunteers are women, we welcome men to show their support of women in orthopaedics, and volunteer as well. Additional information about the program can be found at <http://perryinitiative.org>.



Reference

1. Rohde, RS, Wolf, JM & Adams, JE. Where Are the Women in Orthopaedic Surgery? *Clin. Orthop. Relat. Res.* 474, 1950–1956 (2016).

