



Co-Chairs



Greg Mundis Jr., MD
Scripps Clinic
San Diego Spine Foundation



Michael Vitale, MD, MPH
Columbia University Medical Center
Daniel and Jane Och Spine Hospital

July 31–August 1, 2026
Park Hyatt Aviara Resort | Carlsbad, CA

BRIDGING THE | GAP

LEARN. PLAY. GIVE.

A course for spine surgeons and corporate leaders

SUPPORTED BY:

BROADWATER.LLC

Dear Colleagues:

At its heart, Bridging the Gap (BTG) is guided by a simple philosophy:

Learn. Play. Give. We strive to create a space where ideas are exchanged and applied, where meaningful connections are built, and where we are challenged to give back—to our families, our teams, our communities, and one another.

The meeting provides a unique opportunity to step away from the daily pressures we all face, and focus on human skills that foster success and fulfillment in our lives.

In 2025, we addressed *Leadership*. This year, we're turning our attention to **Communication**, with an outstanding program and a faculty of communication experts, experienced surgeons and corporate leaders (see page 3).

The meeting welcomes spine surgeons, allied health professionals, and corporate leaders, and of course spouses and partners. By bringing together this diverse audience, BTG provides an environment where learning is richer and growth is collective.

We hope you'll join us for this year's *Bridging the Gap* experience.



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Target Audience

This course is designed for surgeons and medical professionals in the spine surgery field, as well as personnel from spine companies.

This course is not CME accredited.



The San Diego Spine Foundation (SDSF) was established by Behrooz A. Akbarnia, MD in 2004 to support spine-related research and education. The SDSF's mission statement is to advance the treatment (or care of patients with) spinal disorders by empowering surgeons through innovative research, education, and professional development opportunities.

Visit sandiegospinefoundation.org for more information.

For more information on Bridging the Gap, visit bridgingthegap-sd.com

Key Dates

Grant Applications

June 8

Housing Deadline

June 23

Early Registration Deadline

June 23



Faculty and Speakers

Co-Chairs



Greg Mundis Jr., MD
Scripps Clinic
San Diego Spine
Foundation
San Diego, CA



**Michael Vitale,
MD, MPH**
Columbia University
Medical Center
Daniel and Jane Och
Spine Hospital
New York, NY

Program Directors



Robert Eastlack, MD
Scripps Clinic
La Jolla, CA



Steve Forti
Hospital for Special
Surgery
New York, NY



Burt Yaszay, MD
Seattle Children's
Hospital
Seattle, WA

Presenting Faculty*

Dana Jacoby
Vector Medical Group
President & CEO
Denver, CO

Greg McKeown
McKeown, Inc.
Bestselling Author
Cambridge, England

Suken Shah, MD
Nemours
Children's Health
Wilmington, DE

Becky Vermillion
Focus 3
Consultant
Carlsbad, CA

Invited Faculty*

Todd Allen, MD
UC San Diego Health
San Diego, CA

Lindsay Andras, MD
Children's Hospital
Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA

Ali Bagheri, MD
Scripps Clinic
San Diego, CA

Laurel Blakemore, MD
Pediatric Specialists
of Virginia
Fairfax, VA

James Bruffey, MD
Scripps Clinic
San Diego, CA

**Munish Gupta,
MD, MBA**
Hospital for
Special Surgery
New York, NY

Yusef Jordan, MD
Loma Linda University
Medical Center
Irvine, CA

Hani Malone, MD
Scripps Clinic
San Diego, CA

Peter Newton, MD
Rady Children's Hospital
San Diego
San Diego, CA

Joe Osorio, MD
UC San Diego Health
San Diego, CA

Ferran Pellisé, MD, PhD
Barcelona
Spine Institute
Barcelona, Spain

David Skaggs, MD
Cedars Sinai
Los Angeles, CA

Stephen Stephan, MD
Scripps Clinic
San Diego, CA

V. Salil Upasani, MD
Rady Children's Hospital
San Diego
San Diego, CA

** Faculty subject to change.*

Schedule Overview

Friday, July 31

7:00 am – 7:30 am	Registration and Breakfast with Exhibits
7:30 am – 12:00 pm	Course Sessions
9:55 am – 10:20 am	Refreshment Break with Exhibits
12:15 pm – 12:45 pm	Lunch with Exhibits
1:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Golf Tournament
6:00 pm – 7:30 pm	Après Golf Networking
7:30 pm	Early Career Surgeon Dinners

Saturday, August 1

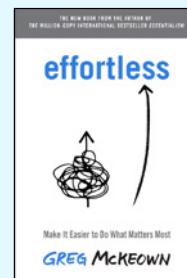
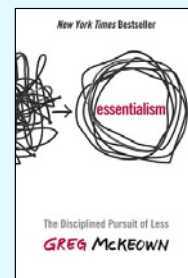
7:00 am – 7:30 am	Registration and Breakfast with Exhibits
7:30 am – 12:00 pm	Course Sessions
9:50 am – 10:10 am	Refreshment Break with Exhibits
12:00 pm – 1:00 pm	Buffet Lunch with Exhibits
1:30 pm – 4:00 pm	Pickleball Tournament

* Program times subject to change.

Keynote Speaker



Greg McKeown is a *New York Times* bestselling author of *Essentialism* and *Effortless*, with over 3 million copies sold and published in more than 40 languages. A globally recognized thought leader, he helps individuals and organizations focus on what matters most and achieve more by doing less. McKeown is one of the world's most sought-after speakers, having worked with organizations including Apple, Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Nike, and the U.S. Navy SEALs. He has spoken in over 45 countries and reaches a global audience through his writing, podcast, and Essentialism Academy.



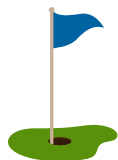
Program Topics

Program Topics Include:

- **Communicating Through Tough Times:** What I wish I knew then, and what I've learned
- **Leadership and Communication:** Parallel pathways to progress
- **The Avoidable Complication:** Systems-based lessons for mitigating communication in spine patients
- **Keynote: Essentialism:** The disciplined pursuit of less
- **Operating at the Edge:** Where skill becomes mastery
- **Learned on the Front Lines (Literally):** Leadership and communication in times of intense pressure
- **Career, Family, Life:** My Communication hits and misses and what I've learned
- **The Spine Surgeons as Communicator-in-Chief:** Leading with clarity at home, in the hospital, and in the community
- **C-Suite Insights:** Leadership and communication insights from the C-suites of major medical companies
- **Focus on the Essentials! Eliminate Hurry! Start Atomic Habits! Be a Digital Minimalist!** Get real—You've no idea how crazy my life is! Realistically, what do I do next?
- **Those Are Great Lectures!** But here are the daily challenges I face in my life—How does this really apply, and what can we learn from each other?



Tournaments



Golf

Tee Up for a Day of Fun!

The **5th Annual BTG Golf Tournament** is a fantastic opportunity to enjoy the great outdoors, connect with colleagues, and show off your golfing skills—or just have fun trying!

Whether you're an experienced golfer or just looking to have fun, all skill levels are welcome!

Date: Friday, July 31
Time: 1:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Location: Aviara Golf Club
Fee: \$425 per person /
\$1600 for a foursome
*(includes green fees, driving
range fees and reception)*



Bonus! Join us for the Après Golf Networking immediately following the Tournament.



Pickleball

Show off your skills, connect with fellow pickleball lovers, and dive into friendly competition at **The 2nd Annual BTG Pickleball Tournament!** Whether you're a pro or a beginner, there's something for everyone. Get ready for thrilling games, awesome prizes, and a fantastic time with amazing people!

Date: Saturday, August 1
Time: 1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
Location: Aviara Racquet Club
Fee: \$100 per player /
\$200 for a duo



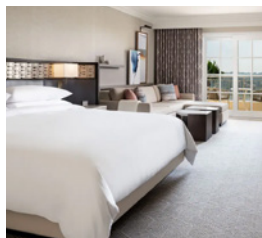
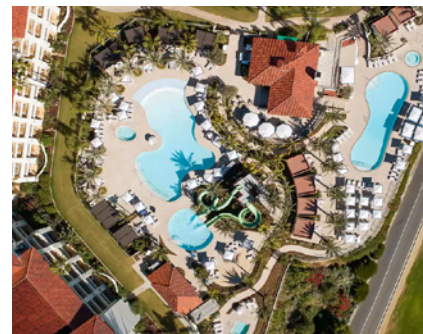
Registration deadline for Golf and Pickleball is July 6.

Register for Golf/Pickleball

Hotel Accommodations

Park Hyatt Aviara

Tucked away on 200 lush, private acres, The Park Hyatt Aviara, is an exquisite 5-star resort overlooking the southern California coast featuring renowned dining, Miraval Spa, golf & more.



Room Rate

Standard King Room—\$420* per night

(*plus a \$30 daily resort fee and applicable taxes)

[Click to Book](#)

Deadline

Be sure to book your room by **Tuesday, June 23** to receive the discounted rate as mentioned above. After this date, the rates may increase and will be subject to availability.

Registration

Scientific Program Registration Fees

Surgeons: \$495

Fellows/Residents/Allied Health: \$195

Non-Exhibiting Corporate Attendees: \$2,500

Spouse/Guest Fee: \$75

Registration fees include access to all sessions, breakfast, breaks and lunch.

A late fee of \$50 will be charged for registrations received after June 23.

[Click to Register](#)

Cancellation & Refunds

To cancel your registration, please send an email to Alyssa Doherty at adoherty@broad-water.com. Full refunds will be granted, less \$50 administrative fee, if cancelled prior to June 23, 2026. No refunds will be granted after June 23, 2026.

In the unlikely event the course is cancelled, your registration will be fully refunded. All other costs incurred by the registration, such as airline and hotel costs are the responsibility of the registrant.

Questions?

Alyssa Doherty | BroadWater, LLC
Email: adoherty@broad-water.com
Tel: 630-681-1040 ext. 310

Grants Available for Early Career Surgeons

If you are a resident, fellow or in the first 3 years of practice, you are invited to apply for a grant.

Grant recipients are required to:

- Attend a company-sponsored dinner on Friday.
- Participate in all sessions.
- Visit exhibits during the event.

Grant Benefits:

- Complimentary registration to the event.
- A grant award of **\$1,000**, which will be distributed at the **conclusion** of the meeting.

To apply, submit your application **here** by June 8. Notifications of acceptance will be sent by June 18.