



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### A Solid Foundation for the Future

*May/June 2012*

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National Conference is always a time of change, transition and opportunity. ASPAN held another exceptional conference that, as always, presented opportunities to learn cutting-edge perianesthesia updates from a cornucopia of excellent speakers. Regardless of whether this was your first conference or your 31<sup>st</sup> conference, Orlando provided avenues to gain new knowledge and experiences, meet and enjoy the company of old friends and colleagues as well as create new and lasting friendships.

A time of transition also occurs within ASPAN as the newly elected officers and appointed committee and strategic work team (SWT) leaders meet for the first time with their work teams. Members new to ASPAN volunteerism and those returning, who have expressed a willingness to participate in the many projects and work to continue moving ASPAN forward, begin their discussions and planning. Whether you are a seasoned leader or a first time volunteer, it is a time of positive energies, excitement, enthusiasm and creativity.

#### **Solid Connections Past and Present**

For each of us, this transition time is the ideal time for reflecting on the stellar, motivational and inspiring nursing of ASPAN leaders who came before us and those who currently stand beside us. From those past dynamic and visionary leaders we have learned valuable lessons and can build on the strong foundation they created. We have learned from them, and from our own experiences, that nursing is an incredibly relational profession.

Daily we are surrounded by patients, families, nursing and physician colleagues, and we constantly touch people's lives with compassion, unique knowledge and skills and a connection unlike any other profession. We care for patients at some of their most vulnerable times. Each day we are thrust into the most intimate moments of the lives of people who were strangers to us only moments before.

#### **Relationships**

This relational work touches our own humanity in ways we often do not anticipate. Each and every one of us has stories about patients who continue to live within our hearts and minds. Although our work is demanding both physically and intellectually, often it is the emotional and relational aspects of nursing that are the most rewarding while at the same time difficult, frightening and exhausting. Recognizing these shared emotions and vulnerabilities brings us close.

As nurses, we need each other for support and understanding. In order for us to do our work for our patients' safety and comfort as well as that of their families, our work must be coordinated and well-communicated: nurse-to-nurse, colleague-to-colleague and shift-to-shift. If our work is truly to make a difference, we must depend on each other, respect each other, and collectively encourage our strengths while supporting our weaknesses.

#### **Connectivity**

Nurses are banded together in ways most people in other professions simply cannot understand. We tend to know our co-workers well, to care about them, and understand them much more deeply than is typically the norm in other professions. We tend to recognize the interdependence and acknowledge the support we received from others along our career path. We cherish the tapestry created by the threads

provided to us by teachers, mentors, and the many colleagues who lent a shoulder when it was most needed. This is the firm foundation we stand on each and every day. Our strength and success has to do with those who came before us and those who held us up and kept us going. This interdependence and support is best demonstrated by a quote from Sir Isaac Newton who once said, "If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants."<sup>1</sup>

At the bedside, in the boardroom; in clinics and classrooms; whether we are working as leaders, lobbyists, mentors, military or managers, nurses make a difference every day in the lives we touch. We are nationally over three million strong<sup>2</sup> and the largest sector of the nation's healthcare workforce. The unique role nursing plays in the lives of patients is being recognized and our voices are being heard. Opportunities and possibilities for nursing's future are unlike any other time in history.

### **Solid Foundation: Future Possibilities**

You have undoubtedly heard of the 2010 Institute of Medicine/Robert Wood Johnson (IOM/RJW) report entitled, "The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health."<sup>2</sup> This report calls for nursing to have a much larger part in shaping national healthcare reform and implementation of the recommendations developed in the milestone report. Both the *Breathline* and the *Journal of PeriAnesthesia Nursing (JoPAN)* have discussed or cited the many recommendations that promote unprecedented opportunities and possibilities for nursing now and in the future.

What are the past lessons learned that will help us in furthering the work of ASPAN and aiding in the decisions that will be made? It is up to each of us, individually to know that history, understand it and use it. As with all times of change and transition, let each of us take some time to think about our individual and collective future – one that is bright with promise, opportunity and possibilities – and spend time to reflect on our personal leadership role and the part each of us has in the future of nursing and the future of ASPAN. Let us remember all those who came before us and focus on their contributions that can still be measured and their words that still resonate within us.

Nursing history is not just a course taught in school, or a fleeting memory of the leaders who paved the road making our journey easier. It is part of our own personal tapestry, the fabric of what we are and what we do as nursing healthcare professionals. Our past is our foundation. It is strong and stable and has provided us with the tools we need to continue building and moving forward; expanding our knowledge, wisdom, skill and influence. We have gained much from those who came before us and worked to construct the framework of what we have today. We will continue to create opportunities and possibilities for the future of ASPAN and for nursing as a whole. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, "You must do the things you think you cannot do."<sup>3</sup> As ASPAN, and as part of the larger global collective of nursing, we are building the future.

### **REFERENCES**

1. Standing on the shoulders of giants. Available at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing\\_on\\_the\\_shoulders\\_of\\_giants](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standing_on_the_shoulders_of_giants) Accessed 2/12/12.
2. The Future of Nursing. Available at: <http://www.iom.edu/Reports/2010/The-Future-of-Nursing-Leading-Change-Advancing-Health.aspx> Accessed 2/12/12.
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