



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### Organizational Challenges: Winning When Safety is First

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It is now 2014. Tell me, where did 2013 go? The ASPAN year is more than half over and the 33<sup>rd</sup> National Conference is fast approaching in fabulous Las Vegas in April. What a GREAT time to visit this city and embrace the education, networking, sights and sounds the conference and city will offer.

#### **Principle of Safety**

ASPAN supports a principle and foundation of safety to provide the best possible perianesthesia care for patients. ASPAN members recognize ASPAN as the premier perianesthesia organization and source of education and resources for best practice. To date, much work within the organization has already taken place. Volunteer committee and strategic work team members, including research, clinical practice, safety, standards and guidelines and evidence-based practice, have reviewed and revised the ASPAN *2012-2014 Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements*. These revisions will be presented to the members of the 2014 Representative Assembly on April 27, 2014.

As an organization of volunteers, the productivity of ASPAN is largely due to the strength and persistence of the membership and of ASPAN's dedicated leadership. We, as perianesthesia providers, have seen and dealt with many challenges in the workplace. Many of these challenges are common across the nation and also have an impact on our international partners. ASPAN's organizational partnerships and liaison assignments enable us to join together within our unique specialties to share knowledge, common practice beliefs and seek resolve for universal practice issues. These relationships provide a win-win situation, allowing perianesthesia nurses to advocate and support a shared vision for safety in practice throughout organizations. The common thread for all of us is safety first for our patients. We also want to give the members the best tools to continue to improve bedside care, nursing education and clinical research. ASPAN's organizational liaison relationships support the growth of its membership and help establish ASPAN's position as the premier society for perianesthesia practices.

#### **Culture of Safety**

A culture of safety must be forefront in the mind of every perianesthesia nurse practicing in today's many settings. In my travels over the last few months, I have been to many liaison meetings where the focus and primary goal of each organization is to put patient safety first and foremost. The Council for Surgical and Perioperative Safety (CSPS) ([www.cspsteam.org](http://www.cspsteam.org)) includes seven organizations with a combined membership of 250,000. This group includes the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists ([www.aana.org](http://www.aana.org)), the American Association of Surgical Physician Assistants ([www.aaspa.com](http://www.aaspa.com)), the American College of Surgeons ([www.facs.org](http://www.facs.org)), the American Society of Anesthesiologists ([www.asahq.org](http://www.asahq.org)), the American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses ([www.aspan.org](http://www.aspan.org)), the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses ([www.aorn.org](http://www.aorn.org)) and the Association of Surgical Technologists ([www.ast.org](http://www.ast.org)). CSPS's goal is to bring members of the surgical team together with a goal of improving patient safety through the perioperative continuum. Critical to the success of CSPS is the teamwork that these partnerships and liaisons support, and critical to successful teamwork is a shared vision. CSPS has the following mission and vision statements posted on its Web site:

"Mission: The CSPS promotes excellence in patient safety in the surgical and perioperative environment.

Vision: The CSPA envisions a world in which all patients receive the safest surgical care provided by an integrated team of dedicated professionals.”<sup>1</sup>

Partnering organizations in CSPA also share common guiding principles and values. These are as follows:

“We are committed to implementation of all strategies that support safe surgery for all patients

We treat everyone with respect and appreciate individual and organizational differences

We value the diversity of our membership and their unique roles in the delivery of care

We are committed to collaboration and effective communication among all team members involved in perioperative care

We are committed to partnerships (regulatory, public, private, research agencies) that improve patient safety

We value a culture of patient safety and a caring perioperative workplace environment”<sup>1</sup>

The checklist concept has been embraced by many perioperative entities as an effective way of reducing patient errors and improving outcomes. The CSPA supports a checklist approach that fosters communication and teamwork. On Tuesday, April 29, at the ASPAN National Conference, there will be a panel presentation, “A Multidisciplinary Approach Strategy for Implementing an Effective Crisis Checklist.” The panel includes CSPA members Pamela Windle (ASPAN), Dr. Brian Cammarata (ASA), Dr. Teo Dagi (ACS) and Charlotte Guglielmi (AORN). This group will discuss the crisis checklist concept as a way to consistently deliver care, and to train, manage and debrief after critical events that may happen in the perioperative setting. The checklist has been implemented in several key facilities, and is designed to assist the entire perioperative team in handling a crisis.

### **Crucial Partnerships**

Many other organizations exist today that either have direct links to ASPAN or have provided ASPAN members and those in perianesthesia practice with vital patient safety tools. Some examples include the Malignant Hyperthermia Association of the United States (MHAUS), the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation (APSF) and the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA).

The Malignant Hyperthermia Association of the United States (MHAUS) can be accessed at [www.mhaus.org](http://www.mhaus.org), a site that has recently been updated and is quite easy to navigate. The site includes information for the medical professional as well as for patients. This organization provides a variety of educational materials and products, including a sample Malignant Hyperthermia (MH) Critical Intervention Record. Expert professionals are available 24/7 to answer questions providing care management and support during a MH crisis via the MH hotline.

The mission of MHAUS is to promote optimum care and scientific understanding of MH and related disorders, and has four primary goals:

“Educate the entire spectrum of healthcare professionals so that MH is rapidly recognized and properly treated by persons in all of the medical disciplines.

Advise and prepare all medical facilities in the United States for prompt diagnosis and immediate treatment of an MH episode.

Help MH-susceptible patients and their families learn to live with MH susceptibility and share with them the experience and knowledge which has accumulated about MH.

Encourage and support research in MH, especially a highly accurate noninvasive diagnostic test.”<sup>2</sup>

As the ASPAN President, I am privileged to travel and meet perianesthesia nurses across the country through component and various other meetings. On occasion, I have provided educational content pertaining to Malignant Hyperthermia. As a true anesthetic emergency, this is an important topic for all

perianesthesia nurses and others in the perioperative setting. This topic should be part of any orientation and should be reviewed on an annual basis because of its low-volume, high-risk status. During orientation and the annual reviews, MHAUS should also be discussed as an invaluable resource for education and for assistance during an actual MH crisis. Information can be included in orientation and review about MHAUS' procedure manual which is easily customizable for any hospital or surgical center, and is available for purchase through MHAUS. This manual provides vital patient care information directly from MH's most reliable resource and advocate, the organization of MHAUS. The pharmacy, intensive and critical care unit, nursing supervisors, medical-surgical nurses and rapid response team or code team members should familiarize themselves with knowledge of this anesthesia triggering disorder, and expectations during an MH crisis. My home component, MOKAN PANA, and I have been members of MHAUS for several years. I would encourage other components and ASPAN members to join this organization to support their goals.

Another safety organization is the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation (ASPF). This is a large multi-disciplinary organization that brings together healthcare providers including physicians, nurses, technology and industry vendors, drug manufacturers and other related professionals with the sole purpose of improving patient outcomes by identifying and avoiding adverse events. One of the many benefits of this group is the newsletter developed by this group called the "Official Journal of the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation." The newsletter can be accessed at [www.apsf.org](http://www.apsf.org) and offers three publications per year.

The APSF's mission is to "improve continually the safety of patients during anesthesia care by encouraging and conducting:

safety research and education;  
patient safety programs and campaigns;  
national and international exchange of information and ideas."<sup>3</sup>

Some of ASPF's current initiatives have a direct impact on perianesthesia practice. These initiatives include: the training of anesthesia professionals to use advanced medical technology, the prioritization of safety initiatives, identification of recommended electronic monitoring strategies, advocacy for the implementation of audible physiologic alarms, exploration of long term outcomes, identification of optimal anesthesia information management systems and medication safety practices, to name just a few.<sup>4</sup>

ASPAN's mission is in concert with the organizational examples discussed. Each organization deals with the same infrastructural issues impacting volunteer-driven organizations such as membership concerns, provision of value related to membership costs, and optimal utilization of volunteers in the work force. More importantly, each has a mission and vision that is driven by a common focus – successful strategies to create, promote, sustain, and support a culture of safety that is patient-focused and aimed at optimal care. As the premier perianesthesia organization and source of education and resources for best practices for perianesthesia nurses, ASPAN's partnership and liaisons with other organizations is critical to sustain our future and success as perianesthesia experts at the bedside, in the classroom and as leaders and researchers.

## REFERENCES

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