Background: An increasing number of patients are presenting to the perioperative area with do-not-resuscitate (DNR) orders. Data collection in our area revealed inconsistencies in defining and documenting a patient’s DNR status. Many nursing and physician staff have expressed confusion regarding the current DNR orders for the perioperative setting. ASPAN, along with other professional perioperative organizations, support having a full discussion regarding DNR with patient/proxy preoperatively.

Objectives of Project: The purpose of this project is to improve the process of addressing the perioperative DNR by defining the following: who documents the discussion with the patient/proxy, if and for how long the DNR should be suspended, when it should be reinstated and specific details pertaining to the option of limited/goal directed DNR.

Process of implementation: Literature search and a review of other hospital policies and order forms was performed. Using the best points from this data, a new perioperative DNR order form was created and presented to the anesthesia faculty group for review.

Statement of Successful Practice: A revision of the current hospital policy on DNR, as well as a specific perioperative DNR order form will be completed by April 2011.

Implications for advancing the practice of perianesthesia nursing: Perioperative DNR orders are often poorly defined at our hospital and many others across the country. A new policy will be developed and applied in the procedural and surgical areas for DNR patients to improve patient safety and care.