The American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses (ASPAN) has the responsibility for defining the principles of safe, quality nursing practice in the perianesthesia setting. This includes professional conduct which reflects an understanding and respect for the moral, ethical and legal issues of perianesthesia practice. ASPAN, therefore, sets forth this position to acknowledge the impact of social media on clinical practice, patient safety and professional behaviors.

**Background**

An expanding array of devices (including, but not limited to, smartphones, tablets, readers, netbooks, notebooks and laptop computers) as well as the enhanced ease of access to the Internet have dramatically changed the ability of professionals and consumers to communicate, socialize and find/share information at incredible rates of speed across the continents. Numerous social media sites allow for the ready access and sharing of news, information (personal and professional), images and other content. Several basic media types currently exist. These more common platforms include virtual group rooms for information sharing, picture and video sharing sites, email and instant messaging and virtual gaming.

In addition to the benefits associated with access to the social media world, there are a number of disadvantages for healthcare providers. These include the potential for:

- Breach of privacy and confidentiality standards
- Violation of professional boundaries
- Abuse and/or misuse of technology both personally and professionally
- Questionable reliability of information sources from the Internet

**Position**

ASPAN is highly committed as an advocate for a culture of safety and to the principles of the *Perianesthesia Standards for Ethical Practice* in all perianesthesia practice settings, for the patient, the nurse and the healthcare team. This commitment includes the impact of technology on perianesthesia practice. ASPAN provides the following recommendations when considering the use of social media:

- The privacy and confidentiality of patients will be maintained at all times
- Perianesthesia registered nurses shall avoid posting or commenting on any negative reflections of colleagues, employers or clinical situations in a public social media forum.
- Perianesthesia registered nurses will protect their personal information in public social media forums.
- Perianesthesia registered nurses will know and endorse institutional policies and procedures related to social media.
- Clinical leadership will provide mechanisms to report any observed breach.
- Educational curriculum will support education providing principles of professionalism, privacy and confidentiality.
- Consider the reliability of the source when utilizing the internet for medical information.
- Perianesthesia registered nurses will refrain from using digital means of socializing during patient care and work hours.

**Expected Outcomes**

ASPN recognizes the added value that digital and social media brings to perianesthesia practice as well as the consequences that improper use of digital and social media can raise. Creating and maintaining a healthy work environment and relationship to digital and social media are essential priorities for perianesthesia registered nurses.

**Approval of Statement**

This statement was recommended by a vote of the ASPAN Board of Directors on April 13, 2013 and approved by a vote of the ASPAN Representative Assembly on April 14, 2013 in Chicago, Illinois.

This position statement was updated and revised at the October 2015 meeting of the Standards and Guidelines Strategic Work Team in Fort Worth, Texas.

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