Process for ASPAN Guideline Development
A Resource
The purpose of this process is to guide ASPAN leaders and evidence-based clinical practice guideline team leaders in the development and revision of ASPAN evidence-based clinical practice guidelines.

**THE START**

Any proposed evidence-based practice guideline must be presented to the BOD for approval to proceed, and if approved would follow the same process as existing evidence-based guidelines. Existing evidence-based clinical practice guidelines should be reviewed at least every three years by a team from the evidence-based practice and clinical practice committees to assure that the guidelines remain current to perianesthesia practice. Reports to the ASPAN BOD should be made on a yearly basis from the EBP Chair, including current status (review process), recommendations from any committee review and proposed revisions.

- Any evidence-based practice clinical practice guideline archived in the National Guideline Clearinghouse (NGC) require yearly reports to the NCG. These reports will be compiled by the ASPAN Nurse Liaison for Education, Research and Clinical Practice, with copies of the report sent to the ASPAN President, Vice-President/President-Elect, CEO, Director of Research, and EBP Chair.

After the review of the evidence-based clinical practice guideline by a team from the EBP and Clinical Practice Committee, a recommendation for a revision is made to the ASPAN BOD. The proposal to the BOD should match with the proposed turnover of the guideline. It is suggested that the evidence-based clinical guidelines be reviewed extensively and revised every four to five years from the date of their publication using the process described later in this document.

The decision to develop, review and revise evidence-based clinical practice guidelines should be based on:

- The recommendation of the guideline review team composed of select members of EBP, Clinical Practice and the Research Committee as needed.
- The need for a guideline revision should be driven by changing clinical practices and the emergence of new evidence.
- The Director for Research who will present the report from the guideline team to include a cost-analysis of the project to the BOD to include a projection of costs and timetable for the revision, using the standard ASPAN template.
- Recommendations from the ASPAN BOD, based on the overall strategic plan of the organization.
Any decision to move forward with evidence-based guideline formation and/or revision requires CEO and BOD approval and adequate budgeting for the project.

**The Team Leader**
The team leader for the project is identified. Team leaders are chosen in collaboration with the CEO, President, Vice President, the Director for Research, the Director for Clinical Practice, and the EBP Chair. (Team leaders must be proficient in literature searches, the EBP process and have the dedicated time available to work on the project.) It is preferred that team leaders have had experience with participation with other ASPAN guideline teams. As some evidence-based clinical guidelines have had previous team leaders, those team leaders may be approached first.

**Setting the Direction – The Questions**
After the team leader is established, the team leader in conjunction with the EBP Chair will evaluate the current guideline proposal. An exploratory team of 2 more people may be identified started to assist in the development of the proposed outline for the new/revised guideline, as well as the development of the proposed questions. The questions will provide direction and focus for the literature search for the guideline, as well as help define the limitations of the guideline. Consultation with the Director of Clinical Practice can uncover current member-driven practice queries relative to the proposed guideline topic.

The team leader, in collaboration with ASPAN National Office staff, and EBP Chair or their designee, should also investigate sources of potential funding, such as outside grants. Unrestricted educational grants may be considered.

Once the outline for the proposed new/revised guideline is in place, the evidence-based guideline team leader will contact the CEO, President, Vice President, Director for Research, Director for Clinical Practice, and the EBP Chair. The team leader will present the proposed outline for the new/revised guideline.

**The Team**
At this juncture the team leader may suggest potential participants and outside organizations to participate. There should be a minimum of two team members per section of the guideline, which includes the review of evidence rating. The decision on the best candidates for the team will be based on:

1. Expertise needed for each section of the new/revised guidelines
2. Interdisciplinary input required for the new/revised guidelines
3. Expertise in guideline development
4. ASPAN involvement, such as EBP Chair, Director of Clinical Practice and Director for Research
The final list of participants will be agreed upon by the CEO, President, Vice President, the Director for Research, the Director for Clinical Practice, the EBP Chair and the guideline team leader. The composition of the team members is determined by the needs addressed above and ASPAN budget. The overarching goal is to have the most qualified team to assure the recognition of the guidelines within ASPAN and to the overall healthcare community. Secondary participants should also be considered at this juncture in case some proposed participants are unable to attend.

- As budgeting and tasks allow, the use of less-experienced ASPAN members should be considered for the purpose of mentoring and educating the EBP process.
- In addition, the use of ASPAN National Office support may also be considered based on production and resource needs.

**THE PROJECT BEGINS**

After the team members are selected the guideline team leader will:

- Determine with the assistance of ASPAN meeting manager possible dates and locations for meetings.
- Include the questions, along with their search terms, inclusion and exclusion criteria, for each of the clinical guideline sections.
- Contact all potential team members regarding their interest and availability.
- Begin the literature search and/or oversee the literature review by the exploratory teams (these teams may also consist of ASPAN National Office staff or masters-level students). To be a part of the exploratory team, participants must be proficient in searches and have access to a wide variety of literature databases.

Once the timeline and team members are determined the guideline team leader updates the CEO, President, Vice President, Director for Research, Director for Clinical Practice, and the EBP Chair. The guideline team leader should be sending frequent, at least monthly, updates to the EBP Chair on the status of the guideline. The CEO, President, Vice President, Director for Research, Director for Clinical Practice, and the ASPAN National Office liaison for education, research and clinical practice should be copied on all correspondence related to clinical guideline development.

Once the literature search is completed the team leader or designee compiles the evidence and sends via CD and/or email to the members of each section. Instructions should include:

- Questions directing each of the sections.
- Encouragement to employ additional literature searches using the search terms provided.
- Timelines to compete the reviews (a maximum of 4 weeks).
➢ Stetler guidelines for ranking of the evidence. A copy of this ranking hierarchy will be included in the materials.
➢ AHA/AAC guidelines for ranking recommendations. A copy of these rankings will be included in the materials.
➢ Directives to develop a power point to present review findings to the consensus group during meeting.

THE MEETING
The consensus meeting is held, with the team leader coordinating with the ASPAN meeting manager and the EBP chair on the communication related to the meeting. The team leader will open the meeting by describing the guideline process. In addition, the team will agree to a group definition and understanding of the concept of ‘consensus’ at this time. A designee is assigned to record minutes from the meeting. The ASPAN National Office support, if available, should be utilized for this purpose. Each team from the various sections will then present their findings and recommendations to the entire team. Group discussion will follow in regards to agreement to the recommendations. The team leader acts as the moderator for these discussions and moves towards consensus-based recommendations.

Within two weeks of the meeting, the minutes from the meeting will be sent to the team leader. The team leader will then send out the minutes from the meeting, along with the time line to complete the writing of the guidelines to the guideline team. Any disagreement in the minutes should be addressed to the team leader within a week.

The team members then develop their sections to the guideline. The sections are then placed on a secure site and evaluated by the entire team. The team leader and designees then incorporate any changes and compile a complete guideline. The team then examines the complete guideline for additional changes and recommendations.

THE GUIDELINE
Once the guideline is written and has been evaluated by the guideline team it will be placed on the ASPAN website for public comment for a minimum of two weeks. The guideline team leader, with support of the team members and the ASPAN National Office staff, will be responsible for reviewing and incorporating comments to the guideline. After these comments are integrated the guideline will be once again sent to the team members for final review and agreement.
Once the guideline is finalized by the team members the guideline will be sent (via the ASPAN National Office) to all members of the BOD for endorsement, then to the members of the Representative Assembly according to established review timelines prior to a vote for inclusion.