



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### Celebrate Strengths: Elevate Practice, Stand Up and Have a Voice

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**Amy Dooley, MS, RN, CPAN, CAPA**  
**ASPAN President 2019-2020**

*"Stay strong. Stand up. Have a voice."<sup>1</sup>*

Shawn Johnson, the famous American gymnast, quoted this statement during her journey to becoming one of the greatest American Olympic athletes. Bring that sentiment over to the perianesthesia world, and you will find a nurse.

#### **The Strength of Nurses**

The first strength of a nurse is the determination to get through nursing school. It is one of the toughest majors in college, and only the strongest and committed complete this major. There are no fluff classes in nursing, and the clinicals and academics place quite a load on students. Having to take the practice exams for the NCLEX sets the bar quite high. Only the strongest get through.

Your nursing career begins as a newly licensed nurse and brings a whole new set of skills. You learn from your preceptor how a nurse functions within the team and you begin the real-world application of your skills. This acclimation to the nursing profession sets up a lifetime of success. Strong support, patience and guidance are what nurses do for each other.

#### **Perianesthesia Strength**

Now, you are a member of the perianesthesia team. You are strong in your assessment skills, have years of experience, and you know what nursing is all about. In the perianesthesia arena, we need to "Stay Strong. Stand Up. Have a Voice."<sup>1</sup> This is so true in our field, as our patients are at a very vulnerable time in their healthcare experience. They need to have surgery, and the breadth of that decision weighs heavily on their minds. Perhaps it is elective and perhaps it is not. Either way, we, as nurses, need to assist them in navigating the system. Staying strong means being present in the moment as we serve patients. Sometimes the weather distracts us, especially in the winter, or our home/family circumstances lead us astray mentally. We need to stay strong for our patients.

#### **Strength for Our Specialty**

We need to stand up in our specialty. This is a key element to get the patients what they need. Maybe the patient's plan for anticoagulation needs to be clarified with his/her provider. Maybe we need to suggest a specialist sees our patient before surgery. Maybe we need to stand up to the supervisor to adhere to the ASPAN standards for nurse:patient ratios. Our patients need us to stand up for them and get them what they need. We, as nurses, do this every day in our practice.

#### **Stand Up and Have a Voice**

Have a voice! This piece of advice is timely, as healthcare changes the landscape of our profession. Having a voice means that we need to be at the table as policy is discussed. We need to speak up to advocate for ourselves and our patients. Become knowledgeable and informed about what is happening at the state level first. Be in touch with your representatives and share your voice. The power of one is real in the world of local politics. Not many people reach out to share their thoughts. So, if you do, it counts!

Your state component may have a governmental affairs committee, which is a great place to start. ASPAN also has a Governmental Affairs Strategic Work Team, chaired by Donna Goyer. Check out the webpage on the ASPAN website under Resources, then Advocacy. Get involved, or support those who do. Please use your voice!

## **REFERENCE**

1. Shawn Johnson quotes. BrainyQuote website.  
[https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/shawn\\_johnson\\_419316](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/shawn_johnson_419316). Accessed September 2, 2019.