



ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

Message from the President

ASPAN: Building Our Bridges for the Future

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During this time of healthcare crisis, many different groups of healthcare providers are joining forces to deal with the shrinking resources. Hospitals that were previously in competition are merging, groups of multi-specialty physicians are combining their practices and many nurses are cross-training to other specialties.

As resources continue to shrink in the healthcare environment, it is felt by our professional associations in the way of decreased membership and decreased attendance at our educational conferences. In response to these changes, professional organizations are beginning to come together and share their resources. These collaborative efforts will have a positive impact on the quality of patient care through collective visions, consensus building and sharing of best practices. In Denver, our Immediate Past President, Terry McLean, RN, CPAN, encouraged us during his closing presidential address to "build bridges with other associations". This message will be an update of those activities.

In July, Maureen Iacono, BSN, RN, CPAN, Vice President/President-Elect, Kevin Dill, ASPAN Executive Director and I attended the National Federation of Specialty Nursing Organizations (NFSNO) meeting in Chicago representing ASPAN as a member organization. The purpose of our NFSNO membership is to network with other specialty nursing organizations' presidents and executive directors, attend educational presentations that promote leadership and association growth, and to participate in a forum for group endorsement of position papers.

In November, we attended the National Organization of Liaisons Forum (NOLF) as a member of the organization. NOLF is a forum organized by the American Nurses Association (ANA) to bring the specialty nursing organizations together with ANA for a public policy meeting and an update on ANA activities. Many specialty nursing associations are members of both NFSNO and NOLF. Due to shrinking resources, it was a request of the NFSNO and NOLF membership to combine these two meetings into one. A task force was formed and the first NFSNO/NOLF meeting will take place in November 1998. I am honored to have been appointed to serve on the educational planning committee for the first NFSNO/NOLF joint meeting. Another positive outcome of this joint meeting will be that all specialty nursing organizations and the ANA will be coming together to share a vision for quality patient care and to promote the nursing profession.

In February of 1998, ASPAN and the ASPAN Foundation will be hosting the first Consensus Conference on Perioperative Thermoregulation in Bethesda, Maryland. As you have read in the November/December issue of *Breathline*, the purpose of the conference is to develop a national guideline for normothermia and hypothermia based on current research. These guidelines will be developed through group consensus of multi-specialty and multi-disciplinary healthcare professionals.

The participating organizations are the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, the Academy of Medical Surgical Nurses, the American College of Surgeons, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, Association of Nurse Executives, Association of Operating Room Nurses, American Society of Anesthesiologists, and the Malignant Hyperthermia Association of the United States. ASPAN hopes that another outcome of the conference will be the formation of a task force to develop a clinical guideline for

temperature management of the perioperative patient. If you have a special interest in temperature, please plan to attend.

In 1996, the ANA and AACN hosted a summit and invited all specialty nursing associations to attend. At this summit, the Best Practice Network was presented and associations were invited to join. In October of 1997, ASPAN joined the Best Practice Network at the level of Circle of Transformation. The Best Practice Network is a way to share innovative practices and creative solutions in healthcare. These best practices may be submitted by all healthcare professionals from all specialties, disciplines and roles. The Best Practice Network is presently composed of three parts: a web site (www.best4health.org) that describes best practices that have been submitted, a written directory describing best practices, and an international conference that will be held to showcase the best practices. Twenty five associations have joined the Best Practice Network. ASPAN is proud to be one of the collaborating associations. I encourage you, as an ASPAN member, to submit your best practice so that we can strive to maintain a high quality of care for the perianesthesia patient.

As you can see, ASPAN is busy "building bridges" to promote high quality patient care through collective vision, consensus building and the sharing of best practices. As an ASPAN member and a provider of patient care, you can assist by building bridges at the bedside. On a unit level, work with your colleagues to come together with the common goal of high quality patient care as the focus of your practice.

Reach out to other specialty units such as the OR, ICU, ASU, PACU, Med-Surg Floor and the ER to resolve problems within the system that prevent the best patient care possible and that cause conflict between the units. As we learn to work together as healthcare professionals, regardless of specialty or discipline, we will be able to raise the level of care that our patients receive. Start building your "bridge" today!