



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### Circle of Influence: ASPAN is “At the Table”

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**ASPAN President 2003-2004**

How often have you asked yourself this question: “Who are they, those professionals making all the regulatory decisions affecting our practice?” The most influential group has been the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), and then each state has the Department of Health (DOH) followed closely by OSHA, HIPAA, and on and on. Frequently decisions are handed to us and we speculate as to who put this together and whether there was any thought about our part in the process and how the recommendations will affect our delivery of care. Will the result complicate, obfuscate or enhance? It never seems to matter.

We happen to be they. We, as ASPAN, are at the table when important decisions are being made regarding healthcare and care delivery.

By invitation from the JCAHO, I had the privilege of participating on behalf of ASPAN in the Summit on Wrong Site Surgery. On May 9th, the summit convened with representatives from 30 professional organizations along with representatives from the JCAHO. The focus of discussion was on the scope of the problem, why the problem occurs, what has already been done to mitigate or eliminate the problem, and what should be done in the future to produce a lasting resolution. The potential outcome could be a consensus by those closest to the issue on adoption of a universal protocol for preventing these occurrences. The right people were brought together to determine the most efficacious standard for avoiding wrong site surgery.

This is definitely an authentic example of how your organization works for you. Your voice as a perianesthesia nurse was heard. In a small breakout session, I was able to directly influence the decision on “what” should be signed and “who” should be signing. What a powerful moment for me personally and for you with the implementation of this standard. The evolving complexity of the original JCAHO standard will be revised to better respond to the issue of preventing wrong site surgery. A universal standard providing the basic recommendations will be published and each individual institution can build on these recommendations as best fits their practices.

ASPAN will continue to seize every opportunity to assure we are positioned to expand our circle of influence in the legislative and regulatory arenas. Our Governmental Affairs Committee (GAC) is active in keeping us apprised of accomplishments and controversies involving healthcare issues, bills, and laws. Recently, with the assistance of Gena Near, GAC Chair, ASPAN, as a participant organization of Americans for Nursing Shortage Relief (ANSR), signed the revised 2003 Consensus Document. She reports that this revision takes into account the changes that have occurred since the enactment of the Nurse Reinvestment Act. The organizations involved are urging federal policy makers to implement a comprehensive set of initiatives to increase the nursing workforce and to enhance the flexibility allowed in nursing education and clinical practice. Think about the power of speaking with one voice. This influence will be realized with the public and professional recognition of efforts to highlight the rewards of nursing, bring more nurses into the profession and provide opportunities for professional advancement. (GAC Report by Gena Near, June 2003)

ASPAN continues to be your opportunity to speak out and be heard and to ultimately be involved in decisions affecting practice standards, education, and research activities within your specialty. The

examples highlighted here offer a brief description of the high level of activities ASPAN participates in to assure perianesthesia nurses are at the table and our voice is loud and clear when it matters most. Take the initiative to expand your circle of influence and lend a hand in shaping the future to work for us. We must stand together and remain positioned to effectively move forward with “clout.”