



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### Igniting Professionalism through Integrity and Accountability

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**ASPAN President 2014-2015**

Healthcare continues to change. Part of that change has been to provide more care with the same or fewer resources. For many, this can be a moral and ethical dilemma. Feeling pressure from management to deliver a specific productivity number may tempt you to lower your standard of care to meet unrealistic expectations. However, through your understanding and implementation of ASPAN's "Patient Classification/Staffing Recommendations," patient care will never be compromised, and you have the perfect document to bring to your management team to argue for appropriate patient staffing ratios in the PACU. Being supported by the ASPAN Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements, the Standards is one of the most important "tools" you can carry in your nursing toolkit. This publication provides the ability to incorporate the principles, standards, guidelines, practice recommendations and position statements of ASPAN into your organizational culture so that "an appropriate number of registered nursing staff with demonstrated competence is available to meet the individual needs of patients and families in each level of perianesthesia care based on patient acuity, census, patient flow and physical facility."<sup>1</sup>

Conversely, ASPAN's "Standards for Ethical Practice" define one of our professional accountabilities as: "demonstrates stewardship through fair and responsible management of all resources."<sup>1</sup> This means that we must ensure that the necessary resources are available for patient care at peak demand, and flex resources appropriately to do so. ASPAN consistently receives inquiries through its Clinical Practice Committee surrounding staffing. While ASPAN has the "Patient Classification/Staffing Recommendations" both in printed form in the Standards book and online at the ASPAN Web site, there continues to be a need for further clarification of what it means to have two RNs "in the same room/unit where the patient is receiving Phase 1 level of care."<sup>1</sup> ASPAN's Standards and Guidelines Strategic Work Team consistently reviews all clinical practice inquiries and updates the Standards as needed to provide further clarity. To further support your practice, with each publication of the Standards, more leveled evidence is added to each practice recommendation and/or guideline.

Knowledge of the ASPAN Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements is one aspect of professional accountability, but "legal parameters for the scope of RN practice are defined by state nurse practice acts."<sup>2</sup> If it has been a while since you reviewed your state scope of practice, it may be enlightening to reread this document and ensure that no changes have been made. Check your state Board of Nursing Web site. They will have resources for you to review and reinforce your knowledge and understanding of practice. In my state of Arizona, the Arizona State Board of Nursing has a practice exam covering the nurse practice act to test understanding and knowledge. As a licensed professional, this is an excellent way to ensure your practice meets your state's standards.

Also important to perianesthesia practice is delegation. It is the nurse's responsibility to ensure that the patient care technician has the necessary skills and competencies to carry out those duties. ASPAN has a Competency Based Orientation and Credentialing Program for the Unlicensed Assistive Personnel in the Perianesthesia Setting that "provides a comprehensive format for assessing the competency and skill of unlicensed assistive personnel."<sup>3</sup> This is a tremendous resource to utilize at your organization to ensure adequate preparation of all unlicensed patient care technicians.

Finally, “moral integrity is defined as knowing what is right and what is wrong, acting on that knowledge even at a personal cost, verbalizing that you are acting on what you know to be the right thing to do, and doing this with a high degree of consistency.”<sup>4</sup> This concept is more important today than ever before. With the many changes in healthcare, fewer resources and continued high demand for efficiencies, it is imperative to review your inner values and moral integrity. We are in the business of providing care at a time when patients are at their most vulnerable. They trust that we will keep them safe during their surgical journey. They trust that their perianesthesia nurse will always do the right thing. In the preoperative area, continue to be a fierce patient advocate to ensure that all safety measures are complete and an accurate handoff to the perioperative team occurs. When in PACU, make sure that a complete report has been received from the anesthesia provider and RN circulator and that all of your questions have been answered. If you are consistently accountable in following your state nurse practice act along with the ASPAN Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements and your internal moral integrity, you will be the shining example of exemplary perianesthesia practice.

## REFERENCES

1. American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses. *2015-2017 Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements*. Cherry Hill, NJ: ASPAN: 2014.
2. Ulrich, B. The Responsibility and Accountability of Being a Registered Nurse. *Nephrology Nursing Journal*. 2014; 41(3):241, 254.
3. ASPAN Publications. Available at: <http://www.aspan.org/Clinical-Practice/Competency-Based-Orientation-UAP>. Accessed November 30, 2014.
4. Eby R, Hartley P, Hodges P, et al: Moral Integrity and Moral Courage: Can You Teach It? *Journal of Nursing Education*. 2013; 54(4): 229-233.