



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### Become a Beacon of Change for Your Practice

*July/August 2011*

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**ASPAN President 2011-2012**

Alot can change in 30 years. We all recognize that 30 years is a milestone indeed, be it personal or professional. ASPAN celebrated its 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this past year. At the Seattle Conference in April 2011, Immediate Past President Kim Kraft challenged us to “Reinvest in Our Potential” related to our practice as clinicians, researchers, educators and managers, never once believing that we would be unsuccessful in that very wise investment. During her tenure, as well as those of other past presidents, ASPAN experienced a variety of changes that made it the dynamic and functioning organization it is today.

Change is a constant, wholesome and necessary part of growth, progress and maturation. From childhood to adulthood, we could not wait to be able to go to that first day of kindergarten, or high school, or nursing school, or to make that very first new graduate nursing career choice while feeling ready to take on healthcare, the nursing profession, the world! Thirty years ago we had as a profession just begun to see the impact of research, practice, education and technology, as well as a commitment to perianesthesia practice that was embraced and pushed ahead of its time by visionary ASPAN leaders. Those leaders had high hopes for this Society; they knew that this foundation was to be the start of something big!

#### **Forward Vision**

Over the past 30 years, a series of positive changes occurred that prompted a metamorphosis for this fledgling organizational membership, taking it to approximately 13,400 members strong today. Because of those who committed to make a positive change in their nursing practice, we now have practice guidelines and standards paired with a clear and compelling vision for practice, education, and research. ASPAN has references that not only guide our practice, but also provide clear direction to best practice in institutions nationally and internationally. And to think it all started because nurses wanted to make a change, not only in their clinical practice, but also to make sure that the practice was recognized as a critical care specialty practice. ASPAN, the organization and its members, are indeed a fine example of what collective, positive change can create.

As our specialty evolved and changed from the recovery room to the post anesthesia care unit (PACU), so, too, did the nursing skill set and minimum education and experience requirements. Suddenly, critical care experience, ACLS and PALS became prerequisites to work in this specialty area. With the emergence of ambulatory surgery in the 1980s, perianesthesia nurses began expanding care delivery to the preoperative and same day surgery arena, Phase II PACU and extended observation.

#### **Practice Validation**

Professional certification became a goal for many a PACU nurse (and manager!). The CPAN® credential was recognized as a validation for clinical expertise, soon to be followed by the CAPA® certification. We grew from being post anesthesia nurses to perianesthesia nurses, broadening our practice scope and boundaries. Through it all, as a specialty, we never once lost sight of whom and what was at the center of our care model – the patient and our national practice guidelines.

ASPAN is entering its fourth decade for this practice specialty. This is no time to lose momentum. We are moving toward the future impact of healthcare reform. The recent Robert Wood Johnson

Foundation/Institutes of Medicine report, *The Future of Nursing: Leading Change, Advancing Health*, lists challenges we all must address to prepare for and meet the healthcare demands of the future. Key messages from this report require a shift in our thoughts about the nursing education and preparation paradigm, and the need to embrace the changes that will help to meet those demands. In moving forward, all health professionals should practice to the full extent of his/her education and training. We must improve nursing education to better prepare nurses to lead change, and improve workforce data collection and analysis. It is expected that by 2020, 80% of all nurses should have a BSN, and that the number of nurses that have a doctorate should double. Our real challenge is to recognize that the environment has changed, and we must change as a profession in response.<sup>1</sup>

### **What to Change**

Recently, I read a title from a keynote speaker advertisement that said, "Change is easy ... you go first."<sup>2</sup> How appropriate that statement was for me personally, until my ASPAN colleagues, work place mentors and a particular CNO pushed me to set some attainable professional goals. Knowing I was a diploma graduate, that CNO took every opportunity to ask me about my goals. Every time she saw me, she would ask, "Chris, are you back in school yet?" Visionary ASPAN leaders guided and encouraged me to become active in our organization, fueling my desire to change. They were my beacon, providing a guiding light to achieve those goals. As a result of persistence, mentoring, coaching and faith, I attained my CPAN and CAPA certifications, completed my undergraduate and postgraduate programs, and remained active in our organization. These colleagues pushed, prodded and encouraged me to achieve educational and professional goals of which I could only have dreamed.

I challenge each and every one of you to pick one goal related to your own educational and professional development for which to strive. Plan your positive change one step and one year at a time. It really doesn't matter how long it takes - envision yourself achieving success, and then move on to your next goal. Keep a list on your end table, desk, or bathroom mirror. Stay focused and steadfast. Become a "Beacon of Change" for your practice, and you will inspire others to do the same!

### **REFERENCES**

1. Nurse in Washington Internship. Editors' panel discussion. March 13, 2011; Washington, DC.
2. Sue Hansen Speaks! Keynotes. Available at [http://www.suehansenspeaks.com/personal/change\\_is\\_easy.htm](http://www.suehansenspeaks.com/personal/change_is_easy.htm). Accessed May 29, 2011.