



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### NURSES are the Difference!

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**Susan Shelander, RN, CPAN**  
**ASPAN President 2001-2002**

The nursing shortage is a major concern for all of us. Everyday there is information in newspapers and on television describing another hospital that is challenged by this shortage or distressed by a break in quality. The “lightning” changes in healthcare have made it difficult to understand the issues and to determine solutions to help create a balance and to assure competence at the bedside. Baby boomers are retiring at rates faster than anticipated and entry into practice is not fast enough. The average age of the bedside caregiver is estimated at 46 years old and some specialties suggest the average age even older. As professional nurses we feel the pressure every day as we observe the higher acuity of inpatients and the high volume of outpatients needing our care and attention. We recognize the reduction in staffing patterns and the demands placed on our time. The rush never seems to slow and the pace is always at record speed. We are all striving for a reputation of excellence, maintaining costs that are affordable to the patient and the provider, and setting service standards that exceed rather than just meet the patient’s needs in order to establish best practice in all clinical settings. Quality is a priority and we all know patient safety cannot and will not be compromised.

As recently as March 2001, the Institute of Medicine (IOM) released a second report “Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century” detailing steps that must be taken to make healthcare systems more responsive to patient’s needs and to involve the patient in decisions relative to care. It is hoped these rules will assist hospitals and caregivers in designing systems that promote the safe delivery of care and encourage collaboration among caregivers to maintain the integrity and validity of patient care with documented quality outcomes. The aims for improvement addressed in the IOM report are focused on the premise that healthcare will be safe, effective, patient-centered, timely, efficient, and equitable.<sup>1</sup> Collaboration is key to establishing a quality initiative both in our hospitals and through our professional organizations. When physicians, nurses, and administrators are committed to the same goals, at the same time, then quality outcomes and processes begin to take shape and exist at the bedside of our patients. Quality cannot happen if only one segment of the collaborative process is leading the team and driving the charge. All segments of our patient care delivery system need to create quality synergy and win-win outcomes for the patient, the care team, the hospital, and society.

As the American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses, our responsibility is to collaborate with our professional colleagues and peers to promote patient safety and quality outcomes on a much broader scope. ASPAN is very fortunate to have been invited by Robert K. Stoelting, MD, to continue participation on the Anesthesia Patient Safety Foundation (APSF) of the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA). The mission of the APSF is that “no patient shall be harmed by anesthesia.” Denise O’Brien, BSN, RN, CPAN, CAPA, is the newly appointed liaison to the APSF. She will bring perianesthesia nursing concerns to the discussion and share information highlighting our quality and patient-focused standards of care as published in the ASPAN *2000 Standards of PeriAnesthesia Nursing Practice*. The Anesthesia Care Team of the ASA, chaired by Jane Fitch, MD, has also welcomed ASPAN for many years. I will have the honor of bringing information to this group of physicians about ASPAN activities as we all work together to provide the highest standards of care and patient safety for anyone undergoing anesthesia.

The patient passes through many phases of pre and post anesthesia care in a virtually seamless manner when undergoing the simplest to the most complicated of procedures. As perianesthesia nurses we understand the scope of our care begins in the preadmission testing center and does not end until patient

follow-up is completed through the post procedure phone call and documentation in the medical record. The perianesthesia nurse is responsible for the integrity of this care and making sure no step is overlooked. Quality and patient safety are a priority as perianesthesia nurses guide and direct the processes. Therefore monitoring and assessing all parameters of patient care and safety enable us to understand the processes and to define the standards that result in quality outcomes for every patient needing our competence and our expertise.

In April during our Boston National Conference, PeriAnesthesia Best Practice posters and abstracts displayed information on clinical subjects such as: Surgical flow, Family-Centered Care in the PACU, Online Documentation, Pain Standards and QI Principles, and Correct Procedure Assurance. All reflected our membership's commitment to patient safety and quality care. We look forward to even greater participation next year in the 'Celebrate Successful Practices' presentations. Quality and patient safety are foremost in the minds of perianesthesia nurses across our component organizations. What are you doing in your institutions to assure quality and patient safety? Reviewing the ten rules in the IOM report is a great place to begin determining what areas need improvement or attention in your unit. The IOM report can be read in full on the web through the National Academy Press Web site ([www.nap.edu](http://www.nap.edu)).

Our patient consumers are savvy and expect quality outcomes when in our hospitals. Gone are the days when giving information was considered taboo. Today's consumer cannot absorb enough information and frequently asks questions that encourages the caregiver to research facts before providing information. Quality care begins with information and the more the better. Patient education is a priority for ASPAN and the quality information on our web page is a reliable resource for our patients. Topics include Pre Anesthetic Interview and Testing, What to Expect Day of Surgery, Pre Operative Holding Area, What to Expect in the Operating Room, What to Expect in the Post Anesthesia Care Unit, Admission to a Facility, Outpatient Surgery, What to Expect if You are Going Home the Day of Surgery, and Pain Management. If you have not discovered this information at [www.aspan.org](http://www.aspan.org) home page perhaps this will become a new means of sharing information with your patients. Quality information for our patients often begins with the perianesthesia nurse.

Achieving quality outcomes is not a simple process. It is complex and requires constant evaluation and review in order to overcome obstacles and focus on necessary details. Systems must be designed to ensure quality processes are in place, data is tracked, progress is monitored, desired outcomes are achieved and, most importantly, the needs of the patient who is expecting safe, quality focused, evidence-based care are served. As perianesthesia nurses would we expect any less if we were the patient? Making a Difference is up to each of us as we make sure quality care and patient safety are a priority for every patient under the supervision of our expertise. Quality and safety matter to everyone.

## REFERENCE

1. Institute of Medicine (IOM) Report, March 2001, National Academy Press Web site.