



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Message from the President

### Journey to Perianesthesia Excellence: Partnership and Collaboration

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**Pamela E. Windle, MS, RN, CNA, BC, CPAN, CAPA**  
**ASPAN President 2006-2007**

Happy New Year to you! It's that time of the year when we suddenly realize that another year has ended, and we don't really know what we have accomplished... I recently read that about 80% of people tend to break their New Year's resolutions before the end of January. Perhaps what we should do is try to have realistic expectations about our resolutions and what we want to achieve in the coming year. That means we need to be persistent, enthusiastic, creative, and feel energized and visionary.

It is often said that we get what we expect out of life. For example, if you expect people to like you, to accept you, and to be interested in you, they generally will. We can vary expectations by raising them or lowering them to best suit our situations and experiences. As perianesthesia nurses, what should we expect in 2007 and how can we resolve to get there?

#### **Future Vision**

First, expect that the nursing shortage will remain one of the biggest issues in healthcare. Are there any viable solutions to this problem? Maybe nurses will begin to ask for work in hospitals to be accomplished differently. Or maybe nurses will be given additional freedom, autonomy and resources to reach their desired outcomes while redesigning nursing work to more efficiently and effectively use professional knowledge, skills and decision making.

Patient safety will also remain an issue. Perianesthesia nurses can play a significant role in applying safety strategies for groups of patients in the perianesthesia areas, and for individual patients with very specific needs. Our nursing outcomes will focus on safety through multidisciplinary collaboration that provides safe transitions in patient care.

While focusing on safety, nurses need to look beyond daily routines to find more innovative ways to help patients "feel good" about their healthcare. As professionals, we can expect the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO) and other regulatory bodies to continually appraise our progress in creating a safe environment for patient care. JCAHO's 2007 National Patient Safety goals are comprehensive and we must revise our work plans to meet new requirements in order to achieve these goals.

#### **Nurses at the Table**

Next, expect nurses to be at the table as new models of care delivery are developed. Many healthcare stakeholders are seeking new ways to improve system processes. This exciting opportunity will have a more positive outcome if nurses have a voice during the design phase. This is especially true when hospitals undergo renovation or construction, and when new freestanding facilities open.

Nurses cannot wait for others to decide what the new healthcare delivery environment will be, and then complain later about not having input into that environment. Nurses must stop engaging in a mode of reacting, and instead start acting in a proactive manner. It is not enough to have individual departments working alone toward achieving goals while other integrative parts of the system are left helpless, hopeless, or blaming the other. The need for partnership and collaboration is important in order to influence the future by reaching together to realize desired goals.

## **Collaboration is Key**

During his high school days as the yearbook editor, my son defined collaboration as “the act of working together.” Collaboration is thought to be an event, but it is actually a process with ongoing interactions that are viewed as a relationship. Essential elements of success include the principles of collaboration and partnership.

Leading an organization is not enough. We need to collaborate among, between, and within our components, as well as with other professional organizations. An excellent example of successful collaboration is the completion of ASPAN's Guideline for the Prevention and/or Management of Postoperative Nausea and Vomiting (PONV) and Postdischarge Nausea and Vomiting (PDNV). True collaboration emerged as a group of experts from various organizations tapped one another's knowledge and expertise to provide an outstanding resource guide for all healthcare providers.

ASPAN is frequently involved in collaboration with other nursing organizations, and is on the leading edge when it comes to generating and sustaining partnerships with other organizations. As a member of the Nursing Organization Alliance, our voice is “at the table” providing professional specialty information. Our long-time partnerships with the American Society of Anesthesiologists, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, American College of Surgeons, and the Association for periOperative Registered Nurses have produced many valuable projects that enhance patient care and safety. ASPAN is committed to working with consumers, industry representatives, physicians, and other healthcare professions.

Partnerships are cooperative relationships between people or groups who agree to share responsibility for achieving specific goals. The power of partnership begins with the recognition that no organization exists in a vacuum – we can only achieve success and prosperity by effectively working with others. Working together eliminates or reduces obstacles; therefore, it expands channels of communication to permit access to greater resources, talents and strengths while aligning the interests of our organization with those of a broader community.

Finally, as one partnership tends to beget additional partnerships, our organizational involvement produces a positive and strengthening effect. Partnerships serve to make ASPAN a more positive, ethical, and friendly place for members.

## **The Future**

The future model for healthcare delivery I foresee includes more collaboration and partnership with interdisciplinary departments, internal and external organizations, policy makers, legislators, and most of all, with our patients/families and physicians. As patient advocates we must continue to partner with legal and regulatory agencies instead of fighting against them, while we adopt “We're all One” mindset for the betterment of healthcare services.

Nurses expect to be valued, so let's value ourselves and what we are, who we are, and all that we have. Excellence in nursing will always require attentive participation, partnership, and collaboration. Let's value each other as professionals, combine all of our valuable and varied experience, and put it to good use!

Anything can happen in this rapidly changing world. So, will everything we aim for actually come to pass? One thing is certain in 2007: we can expect ASPAN to continue its resolve to grow stronger, achieve more, excel in services and benefits for our members, and to always advocate for perianesthesia nurses, patients and their families.