

## **DUAL CERTIFICATION: PREPARED TO MEET THE GROWING NEEDS OF THE “GRAYING OF AMERICA”**

Team Leaders: Lizabeth Delaney, MSN, RN, CAPA, BC; Elena Nowicki, BSN, RN, CAPA, BC  
Middlesex Hospital, Surgical Center, Middletown, Connecticut

### **Background information related to the problem identification:**

By 2020 the percentage of adults over 65 will double, presenting challenges for nurses to develop a strong knowledge base to care for older adults. The percentage of nurses certified in gerontology has not increased proportionately with the number of aging Americans, thus our PACU, already 100% CAPA certified, decided to embark on the journey of a second certification to meet the unique needs of this growing population.

### **Objective of project:**

1. Increase our knowledge in geriatrics by becoming certified.
2. 100 % of our staff will hold dual certification in both CAPA and Gerontology.

### **Process of implementation:**

At our Magnet/NICHE hospital a commitment to best practice by obtaining certification is encouraged. With supportive infrastructure and inspiration from our Geriatric nurse educator, our nurses unanimously accepted the challenge of seeking certification in gerontology, validating our commitment to provide the best care possible to our older perianesthesia patients. Materials and resources were obtained, study groups formed, and the process began. All of our PACU nurses have now passed the Gerontology certification exam, making our unit 100% dual certified.

### **Statement of the successful Practice:**

With the increased number of geriatric patients we are now encountering in the perianesthesia setting, our dual certification validates our skills and expertise in caring for and communicating with older surgical patients.

### **Implications for advancing the practice of perianesthesia nursing:**

Research indicates that certified nurses feel more empowered, utilize creative problem-solving techniques, have more confidence and competence, and are associated with better patient outcomes.