



# ASPAN

American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses

## Clinical Practice: Frequently Asked Question

**Q: Does ASPAN have a position on dose ranging of medications? If so, what is it?**

**A:** Patients are prescribed medications, including opioids, for pain control following surgical procedures. The medical orders are sometimes written as range orders and sometimes written with specific doses for specific pain levels. The American Society for Pain Management Nursing (ASPMN) supports safe medication practices and the appropriate use of PRN range orders for analgesics in the management of pain within the scope of nursing practice.<sup>1</sup> The Joint Commission does not prohibit the use of range orders as long as those orders are allowed by the organization's medication management policy.<sup>2</sup>

The ASPAN Practice Recommendations: The Prevention of Unwanted Sedation in the Adult Patient and Practice Recommendation: Safe Medication Administration state that opioids are commonly prescribed for the treatment of postoperative pain and describes multimodal and opiate stewardship in the care of the adult patient. PACU nurses monitor postoperative patients for opioid-induced sedation and life-threatening respiratory depression.<sup>3,4</sup>

ASPAN does not have a position statement that addresses dose ranging. This is specific to the institution and the anesthesia provider. ASPAN encourages organizations to set policies and define practices for range orders for medications. Patient safety is priority for PACU nurses in caring for postoperative patients.

### References:

1. L. Renner, D.J. Drew, A. Smith et al., Position Statement: Range Orders in the Management of Pain, Pain Management Nursing, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pmn.2023.09.013>. Available at: <https://www.aspmn.org/docs/Range-order-published-copy-11-16-23.pdf>.
2. The Joint Commission. Medication Administration – Does the Joint Commission Prohibit the Use of ‘Range’ or ‘Double-Range’ Orders? Updated on October 21, 2021. Available at: <https://www.jointcommission.org/standards/standard-faqs/hospital-and-hospital-clinics/medication-management-mm/000002153>.

3. Practice Recommendation: The Prevention of Unwanted Sedation in the Adult Patient. In American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses. 2023-2024 perianesthesia nursing standards, practice recommendations and interpretive statements. Cherry Hill, NJ; ASPAN.
4. Practice Recommendation: Safe Medication Administration. In American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses. 2023-2024 perianesthesia nursing standards, practice recommendations and interpretive statements. Cherry Hill, NJ; ASPAN.

*This FAQ was reviewed and updated November 2024.*