



## A Position Statement on Contemporary Social Issues

The American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses (ASPAN) has the responsibility for defining the principles of safe, quality nursing practice in the perianesthesia setting. As the premier organization for perianesthesia nursing practice, ASPAN defines safe care for a wide variety of perianesthesia patients in the setting of various modern-day, social challenges. ASPAN sets forth this position statement to acknowledge the need for increased awareness of the presence and impact of contemporary social issues as these events effect the delivery of safe, high-quality clinical care.

### **Background**

Society is constantly changing, subject to cultural, economic, and world-wide health challenges impacting access and delivery of care. Compounding the complexity of healthcare issues associated with contemporary social challenges is the fact that many of these problems do not occur in silos. Many social issues are linked with co-occurring conditions. Examples include domestic violence in the setting of mental health disorders, or substance use disorders and suicide or trafficking. Perianesthesia registered nurses serve patients from all populations and social influences. Social determinants that impact health include, but are not limited to, employment status, marginalized individuals, gender diversity, global health, community safety and civil unrest, mental health, multiple forms of violence, and presence of substance use disorders.<sup>1</sup>

### **Position**

ASPAN is highly committed as an advocate for providing a culture of safety in all perianesthesia practice settings, for the patient and family, the nurse, and members of the healthcare team. Perianesthesia registered nurses will explore and embrace the following recommendations:

- Competency
  - Increase self-knowledge of contemporary social issues
  - Refrain from making assumptions/stereotyping
  - Participate in the development of evidence-informed ongoing education and training
- Advocacy
  - Advocate for healthcare policies to improve interprofessional partnerships<sup>2</sup>
  - Advocate for educational programs to improve competence caring for healthcare disparities<sup>2</sup>



- Patient care
  - Assess for social determinants impacting healthcare of the individual and family
- Research
  - Research to identify and manage disparities in healthcare<sup>2</sup>
  - Research to identify the impact of stressful contemporary issues on patients and families seeking healthcare

## Expected Outcomes

Perianesthesia registered nurses practice holistic assessments and perianesthesia care to a wide variety of patients and families with a wide variety of social determinants. Perianesthesia registered nurses need to familiarize themselves with this position statement and inform and educate colleagues and other healthcare professionals.

Following the principles outlined in this position will result in:

1. Increased awareness of the impact of contemporary social issues on healthcare choices and experiences
2. Strong perianesthesia nursing advocacy for healthcare disparities
3. Participation in policy development to improve healthcare outcomes
4. Development of evidence-informed education to increase awareness of the impact of contemporary social issues on healthcare
5. Involvement in relevant research regarding social determinants and associated impact on the perianesthesia experience for patients and families

## Approval of Statement

This position statement was endorsed by a vote of the ASPAN Board of Directors on April 6, 2022, in Philadelphia, PA, and approved by a vote of the ASPAN Representative Assembly on April 7, 2022, in Philadelphia, PA.

## REFERENCES

1. Thornton M, Persaud S. Preparing today's nurses: social determinants of health and nursing education. *OJIN*. 2018;23(3). <https://doi.org/10.3912/OJIN.Vol23No03Man05>
2. Robichaux C, Sauerland J. The social determinants of health, COVID-19, and structural competence. *OJIN*. 2021;26(2). <https://doi.org/10.3912/OJIN.Vol26No02PPT67>