

POSITION STATEMENT 6
American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses
A Position Statement on Fast Tracking



The American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses (ASPAN) has the responsibility for defining the practice of perianesthesia nursing. An integral part of this responsibility is to promote a safe, appropriate level of care following anesthesia.

ASPAN sets forth this position statement to safeguard the delivery of postanesthesia care in a safe, appropriate and cost effective manner.

Background

In response to the concerns of many perianesthesia nurses from around the country, the Standards and Guidelines Committee conducted a review of literature and gathered information from various institutions in order to identify issues related to fast tracking of patients (bypassing Phase I PACU and proceeding directly to Phase II). The following issues related to “fast tracking” were identified:

1. There is no agreed upon definition of what factors are involved in fast tracking.
2. The implementation of this practice does not always include clear practice guidelines.
3. Cost reduction is a very real concern in health care but should not direct practice without including defined guidelines addressing the safety and appropriateness of care.
4. There is very little data addressing patient outcomes related to this practice.

Position

It is, therefore, the position of ASPAN that wherever fast tracking is practiced a collaborative plan of care be developed between the anesthesiology department and perianesthesia services. The plan should include written guidelines addressing the following:

1. Appropriate patient selection.
2. Preoperative education of the patient and family.
3. Appropriate selection and management of anesthetic agents.
4. Assessment criteria used to evaluate patient readiness in bypassing Phase I at the end of the surgical procedure.
5. Discharge criteria.
6. Monitoring and reporting patient outcomes.

Expected Outcomes

Perianesthesia nurses need to familiarize themselves with this position statement and inform and educate peers, nurse managers, hospital administrators and the physician.

Management needs to develop a multidisciplinary, collaborative plan to provide safe, appropriate care when fast tracking following the delivery of an anesthetic is practiced within their institution.

ASPAN, as the voice of perianesthesia nursing practice, must externalize this information by sharing this position statement with regulatory agencies and professional organizations that interface with the Postanesthesia Care Unit.

Approval of Statement

This statement was recommended by a vote of the ASPAN Board of Directors on April 16, 1999 and approved by a vote of the ASPAN Representative Assembly on April 18, 1999 in Honolulu, Hawaii.

This position statement was reviewed and updated at the October 2007 meeting of the Standards and Guidelines Committee in Batesville, Indiana.

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