

2021 All-Virtual ASPAN National Conference

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The ASPAN conference this year was another year of being unable to hug all of my friends but I was thankful for the virtual meeting. I am happy that ASPAN was able to have an educational platform to support this opportunity. I thank the Board and National office for the opportunity to have a virtual conference.

I was able to watch the opening and closing with friends as I still traveled to Florida minutes from the beach. We watched some of the sessions in the morning and sun in the afternoon. I missed the instant gratification of seeing ASPAN members from all over the country this year in person but considering no conference last year-I am so happy to have the educational opportunities at my own pace. I was able to relax and enjoy the sessions and even take a break with a pause of the computer click.

National daily news headlines a multitude of disasters reported each day. The footage includes natural disasters such as hurricanes, earthquakes, weather variations, and uncontrolled fires. Other disasters include acts of terrorism, military/wartime, and continually changing medical needs, such as the COVID- 19 pandemic and mass casualty deaths. Many of these events affect healthcare placing a strain upon available hospital beds. The beds now at capacity with COVID-19 patients are stretched to accommodate victims of the recent disasters of Hurricane Ida affecting the Gulf Coast. Healthcare providers are challenged immensely, and the question of "Are standards of care being meant?"

In the lecture presented by Myrna Mamaril "Oh No! Do ASPAN Standards Apply in a 'Surge Capacity?'" perianesthesia nurses face many challenges. Working conditions require compromise in terms of resources, settings, and patient needs, creating challenges to meeting routine standards of care. During a surge/emergency /crisis situation, a perianesthesia nurse may not be able to fully follow ASPAN standards. It is important to follow the institutional standards of care that have been put into place for that situation.

According to the Institutes of Medicine and American Nurses Association define crises standards of care as: "A substantial change in usual healthcare operations and the level of care it is possible to deliver... which is made necessary by a pervasive or catastrophic disaster. This change in the level of care delivered is justified by specific circumstances and is formally declared by state government, in recognition that crisis operations will be in effect for a sustained period.¹"

The challenges in healthcare during the ongoing pandemic, for example, include limited resources, such as PPE, staffing, equipment, basic supplies, and room availability. In the aftermath of hurricane Katrina , healthcare workers had to continue to provide care despite no electricity, no cell phone service, extreme fatigue, and little or no supplies. In both of these scenarios, healthcare workers are suffering from fatigue while still delivering care with limited resources. Both of these healthcare crises raise the question of "Is there an end in sight?"

Healthcare providers are truly HEROES! Care continues to be delivered with true dedication and compassion in ever-changing circumstances and continual challenges. Many scenarios have no algorithm to follow, and care is provided with often limited resources and continually changing circumstances. ASPAN members have shown throughout these challenging times our 'core values of- courage, advocacy, respect, excellence and service.²"

I am looking forward to Philadelphia as a time of being thankful to all of our nurses that have struggled through this pandemic to being together once again.

References

1. American Society of Perianesthesia Nurses. 2021-2022 *Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements*. ASPAN: 2020, p. 186.
2. American Society of Perianesthesia Nurses. 2021-2022 *Perianesthesia Nursing Standards, Practice Recommendations and Interpretive Statements*. ASPAN: 2021, p. 2.