

2025 ASPAN National Conference – Dallas, TX

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Attending ASPAN National Conference is such an enlightening, energizing experience. To come to an event with 1,200 nurses from around the country, to network, and exchange ideas from different hospitals, is so fulfilling. The ideas that can be obtained and then used in your work environment can be invaluable. Nurses are the driving work force for any hospital, we can make a difference to our patients at the bedside. Each time I attend Nationals, it makes me proud to be a nurse. We really do have a calling to care for each individual we come in contact with. I've been a nurse for 44 years and still love going to work! It is a calling. You have to really relish working with crazy, smelly, silly, scared, agitated, confused, endearing, interesting, and sick people. Each day is different as you never know who you will encounter. There are so many nursing stories nurses have as we are dealing with people, and it is non-fiction!

Health care must change and update. Nothing stays the same. ASPAN is no different as there will be big changes coming and restructuring that must happen. This was presented at RA and will be presented to next year's RA. Membership has been declining. When you look around at Nationals, you see a lot of older nurses, especially the ones in the leadership roles. When polled, the majority of nurses did like what ASPAN was doing, but didn't want to be part of a local or national board. That does not lead to sustaining a national organization. You need energized nurses to run the organization.

When I was driving out of my neighborhood, there were high school kids waiting at the bus stop in several locations. They weren't talking with each other. They were on their phones individually, in their own world. There wasn't any communication or socialization. There was one stop only that had two kids, and they were not on their phones. They were just standing there, not talking, just looking at the ground. This got me thinking. This is the next generation coming to take our place. I know when we do conferences, we have a bigger virtual audience. The older nurses are used to and like the networking that comes with attending a conference in person. The younger generation seems to like going to a class virtually and not taking the time to drive, talk with other nurses who have attended, even getting free food. We must meet this change with the younger nurses who will take our place. They have been influenced by social media and instant gratification when getting immediate answers from their phone. The social interaction just isn't as present. How do you make this change and keep ASPAN the professional premier organization that it is? It takes "people".

It has been harder to fill board positions, including the treasurer in the smaller components. Some components may have to fold. The EOC SWT and the ASPAN board have a big job ahead of them, along with input from the ASPAN members. There are a lot of very intelligent people involved that will make this happen. The change in each generation will be the biggest challenge and to meet nurses where they are and where they are going. I have every confidence that ASPAN will emerge stronger and better. Afterall, our main objective is to care for the PeriAnesthesia patient. Nurses have a caring spirit, we just need to help them with the administration part.