

AST News and Current Events

AT A GLANCE

Oregon Association of Surgical Technologists Perform Mock Surgery at State Capitol

On Friday, March 20, the Oregon Association of Surgical Technologists demonstrated four surgical procedures, including a total knee replacement, in the State Capitol Building.

The demonstration illustrated the crucial role played by all members of the operative team, particularly the role played by the certified surgical technologist. In addition, it served to draw attention to, and promote passage of SB 379.

A mock surgery is an effort to educate the public and lawmakers on the importance of classroom and clinical training for everyone working in the operating room. Surgical technologists are the only professionals in Oregon operating rooms not required by law to have any training or further credentialing as prerequisite to being hired.

SB 379, currently in the Senate Health Care and Veterans Affairs Committee, aims to change that by setting state standards for the profession.

"It's important for the state and hospitals to close this last gap in operating room patient safety," said Senator Bill Morrisette, D-Springfield, chief sponsor of the bill, along with Reps. Ben Cannon, D-Portland, and Sara Gelser, D-Corvallis.

The surgical demonstration began at 8 am Friday in the Galleria on the first floor of the Capitol.

"Today, in operating rooms throughout our state, there are literally hundreds of surgeries being performed," said Deborah Turner, a surgical technologist and spokeswoman for Oregon Association of Surgical Technologists. "With state and federal scrutiny being directed at reducing

preventable medical errors, many of which occur in the operating room, it is imperative that our health care providers are properly trained. We all expect that our physician will be one of the medical staff in the operating room. But do you know all of the people behind the masks? How can you be certain everyone in that room is educated, skilled, and qualified to perform surgery?"



Members of the Oregon State Assembly work together during a mock surgery to illustrate the importance of teamwork and a trained surgical team in the O.R.

With SB 379, the Oregon Association of Surgical Technologists, joined by many of their surgical colleagues, are pursuing legislation that would make graduation from an accredited program in surgical technology, and holding and maintaining the certified surgical technologist (CST) credential a prerequisite to employment in Oregon.

"Our surgical patients deserve no less than a competent surgical team," Turner said. "Senate Bill 379 intends to bring that last needed part of professionalism to the operating room."

ARC/STSA name change



ARC/STSA has changed its name and logo to better reflect the professionals it represents.

Legislation on the Move Nationwide

Over the past few months, AST's Director of Government Affairs, Catherine Sparkman, JD, has been working in conjunction with state legislatures across the country to make the case for legislation that will require all new surgical technologists to achieve and maintain the CST credential to practice in any O.R. in that state. With successful campaigns in Tennessee and South Carolina, we are making steady progress toward establishing a nationwide standard.

AST has recently enjoyed significant victories on this front in several more key states. The surgical technologist bill has passed in Indiana, and has been signed into law by the governor. In the District of Colum-

bia, a surgical assistant licensure bill amending the Health Occupation Regulatory Act to recognize NBSTSA certification, has been passed and is currently in a holding period before being sent to Congress for ratification. Finally, the six-year campaign in Texas has ended. The surgical technologist credentialing bill has been passed by the House and Senate and has been sent to the governor to be signed into law, marking AST's greatest victory to date.

AST will continue to campaign until all states recognize the importance of requiring all newly-hired surgical technologists to have graduated from an accredited ST program, and maintain certification. This will not

only bring greater respect to the profession, but a safer patient experience to the O.R.

A legislative update detailing the recent victories and what it means for the profession will be published in the July issue of *The Surgical Technologist*.

Second Annual AST Clinical Educator and Preceptor Workshop

The Second Annual AST Clinical Educator and Preceptor Workshop will take place on Saturday, September 19, 2009, at the Doubletree Orlando at the entrance to Universal Orlando in Orlando, Florida. A pre-workshop reception will be held on Friday night, from 6-8:00 pm.

September 20-26 is National Surgical Technology Week!



While there is never a bad time to celebrate the importance of CSTs and their role in surgery, there is one week out of the year when all eyes are on you. National Surgical Technology Week provides a unique opportunity to bring attention to the role of the surgical technologist in the O.R.

National Surgical Technology Week provides a great opportunity to educate the general public about the role of a surgical technologist. You may be surprised to learn that many people have never heard of the profession, let alone know what STs do in the O.R. on a day-to-day basis. The best way to call attention to the profession and build support

for the advancement of legislation across the country is by making those around you aware of the significance of the role. Education is key to our continued success. Make it your personal mission to talk to at least one person about the surgical technology profession.

If your facility or campus is celebrating National Surgical Technology Week in a unique way, we'd love to hear about your experience. Send your pictures and stories to publications@ast.org. A National Surgical Technology Week spread will be featured in the November issue. Also, check out the 2009 National Surgical Technology Week poster on page 264 of this issue.

The workshop will feature speaker Steve Milam, JD, whose presentation, “Legal Issues in Evaluation of Clinical Performance and Academic Dismissal,” will run from 8-11:50 am. After a one hour recess for lunch, the session will continue from 1-4:50 pm.

Attendance is limited to the first 150 registrants, so take care of your registration early to ensure your spot. Room rates at the Doubletree Orlando are \$99 per night, single or double occupancy. The extra person charge is an additional \$10 per night. The hotel reservation deadline is August 28. Be sure to mention AST when making your reservations to receive the discounted rate.

Please see the full-page ad on page 276 for complete details and registration information for this exciting event.



Memory Book

In honor of AST's 40th anniversary, this year's conference attendees received an AST Memory Book, which highlights the history of the organization in conjunction with historical flashpoints from the last 40 years. It offers a unique look at the organiza-

tion's roots and the path that helped us get to where we are today.

There is a very limited supply of these Memory Books that are still available for purchase through the AST store. The cost is \$15, plus shipping and handling. You can order online or by contacting member services.