

Professionalism

By Marlene Hill, RN, CPN(C)

There are two important topics that require attention - Professionalism and Certification. This "message" will entertain thoughts on both of these subjects.

Have you ever visited a hospital department where all staff dressed alike and you found it difficult to know which category of worker you were speaking with? Did you ever see a registered nurse working on an inpatient unit dressed in a white or colored T-shirt with matching (or not) sweat pants? Were you impressed? If we, as registered nurses, at times cannot identify to whom we are communicating, how can we request patients to disclose certain personal information if they are unsure to whom it is being told. How can the public be expected to have faith in, and respect for, our profession?

Recently while visiting a hospital, I saw a RN dressed in a neat uniform and wearing a hat with a "black band". I congratulated her on her professional looking attire and others in the nursing station seemed startled by my comments. My mother-in-law had previously mentioned this person and also said that a supervisor wore her "nurse's hat" as well. Apparently the patients in her room commented "now that's a real nurse". This served as a "wake-up call" for me as my professional appearance is not what it once was!

Over the past few years, our profession has strived to gain increased recognition, keep the public's respect, and educate others of our value to the healthcare system. Perhaps we have overlooked one very important aspect - to enhance our image we must look and act professional.

Some ways to improve our image could include:

- The wearing of neat attire, clean shoes etc.;
- Proper identification badges, Provincial RN Association's "RN" pin;
- Well-maintained nails, wearing only clear polish;
- Hair held neatly in place. Possibility of wearing a modern type of black-banded hat;
- No chewing of gum;
- Communicating in a professional manner;

- The use of appropriate body language; and,
- Promoting our nursing profession with positive comments only.

Difficult to achieve? Maybe, but the positive aspects outweigh the negative. It may also be timely to suggest that the baccalaureate and diploma nursing programs could also include an educational component on the importance of professionalism. We need to do all we can to positively promote ourselves and enhance our image. This may encourage an increase in enrollment in our nursing programs.

Perioperative Certification

In June, 2000 I attended a celebration held during the CNA Biennium as it has been 20 years since the idea of specialty certification was conceived. Continue to read on for a brief history of how perioperative certification came about, and the benefits gained from achieving certification status.

The idea of investigating Perioperative Certification began with the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada (ORNAC) in 1990. However, it was not until April, 1992 that an Ad Hoc committee was formed with Anna Kristoff from Saskatchewan as chair and Lorraine Varner from British Columbia as committee member to develop a program in coordination with CNA. After much time and effort, the first Perioperative Certification exam was complete and ready to be written on June 3, 1995 with over 500



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registered nurses participating. Since that time 1,914 candidates have successfully completed perioperative certification and now sign health-related documents using the designated initials of CPN(C).

Initially the importance of perioperative certification to ORNAC members and the benefits of successfully completing this process were identified as follows:

- Improvement in the quality of patient care was achieved;
- An opportunity for continuing education and upgrading knowledge and skills was provided;
- A base line for competency levels was developed;
- Individuals would acquire a higher level of self esteem.

Today those benefits still exist along with others that include:

- Successful candidates are continuing to upgrade their knowledge both on a formal and informal basis for personal satisfaction;
- Eighteen Canadian universities are now allowing credit for certification for the RN enrolled in a baccalaureate program. The list includes: University of New Brunswick, University of Sherbrooke, Ryerson Polytechnic University, Laurentian University, Lakehead University, University of Northern British Columbia, Athabasca University, University of Victoria, University College of the Caribou, St-Francis Xavier University, University of Ottawa, University of Windsor, University of Manitoba, McMaster University, University of Saskatchewan, University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and University of British Columbia;
- Some provinces have financially rewarded RNs achieving certification status.

CNA has recently adopted a resolution stating that it will "take the necessary steps to achieve increased recognition and sustained support for the CNA Certification Program with external organizations".

Registration for writing the 2001 Perioperative Certification exam must be submitted to the CNA by November 3, 2000, and the examination will be written on March 31, 2001.

The Recommended Standards For Perioperative Nursing Practice is required reading and may be purchased from CSA for a cost of \$40.00 which includes GST and shipping costs. To place an order call 1 - 800 - 463 - 6727.

Take the initiative now and join the many registered nurses who have chosen to participate in the Certification process. You won't regret it! ■



Purchase the 4th edition 1998

ORNAC

Recommended Standards for Perioperative Nursing Practice
• Professional • Clinical Standards and
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2003 Recommended Standards

The review process for the 2003 revised edition of the ORNAC Recommended Standards will begin in January, 2001. It seems that it was only a short time ago that the current 1998 revised edition was released and now we are preparing to review and revise it.

The process is long and time-consuming, requiring thousands of hours of volunteer time. The Standards Committee will be seeking individuals and groups of Registered Operating Room Nurses to assist us with this process.

If you are interested in this process, please forward you name, address and area of interest/expertise to:

Rob Richardson,

Box 475, Rossland, BC. V0G 1Y0

Approval Process - Under Review

The ORNAC Standards Committee which is responsible for the approval of Post-Basic Perioperative Education Programs is currently revising the approval process. It was found that the current process was not user-friendly leading to frustration/misunderstanding by both applicants and Committee members.

The process is being reviewed by this Committee and will, hopefully, be presented to the ORNAC Board for approval in November.

We thank you for your patience and understanding while we complete this revision. ■