

Busy, productive Fall in store for ORNAC

After an enjoyable summer, it is now time to return to the harness, so to speak. The executive and board of the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada will have a busy Fall as per our "strategic plan":

1. The first draft for review of the competency statements for operating room nurses;
2. A questionnaire drafted and sent to OR nurses across Canada in regard to R.N. as first assistant.

Should ORNAC go ahead with this project, it will be a major undertaking. At the least, it is important that the national organization be "on top of the situation" and be informed as to what is happening.

3. To lobby for active membership in the CNA's Interest Advisory Council. The CNA board has agreed to the 50% plus 1 membership in CNA by the Interest Groups. The important part, however, will be the Bylaw change in 1991 at the CNA Annual Meeting in Ottawa. Thus, it is vital that we (ORNAC members) lobby our delegates who will attend this CNA meeting in order to gain acceptance for this Bylaw proposal. As well, we should encourage all perioperative nurses to be members of our professional organization.

The advantages in CNA membership and participation in the CNA Interest Group Committees are:

- Most importantly, be a member of the CNA Interest Advisory Committee. It is important that ORNAC be represented at all CNA meetings to inform and be informed. This will enable ORNAC to have input into decisions that will have an influence on our specialty.
 - Support for national activities.
 - Speak not only as a national O.R. group, but have the power of the CNA behind us.
 - With CNA we'll have a link with government, and the Power to change legislation with CNA support.
 - Maintain and improve standards of patient care.
 - Show a strong and cohesive professional front and improve the image of the OR nurse by being a member of the CNA.
 - Research and certification support from the CNA.
4. Continue to lobby for operating room experience in the basic nursing programs.
 5. Continue to promote ORNAC's standards.
 6. Continue to promote ORNAC's position statement with regard to "staffing in the O.R."
 7. Promote O.R. Nurses' Day - November 14.

ORNAC activities

(1) Members of the ORNAC executive attended the CNA's Annual Meeting in Calgary in June with specific objectives in mind:

- to promote the benefits of a national O.R. nursing voice; that is, lobby for active membership in the CNA Interest Advisory Council;
- at the ORNAC display booth, we promoted the Association's standards and the national association's (ORNAC's) position on staffing.

A very frustrating experience was attending the CNA Interest Advisory Council meeting - as an observer. There I was, the President of ORNAC, representing one of the oldest and largest interest groups in the country, and I was not allowed to speak because, with our total membership, we have less than 70% plus 1 members in the CNA due to membership from Quebec and Ontario.

I did, however, attend the Advisory Council pre-meeting where I was permitted to report on all the accomplishments of ORNAC. Members of ORNAC can be very proud to publicize their ORNAC association because, although we do not have active membership, we are very much respected as a productive and vital group of caring nurses. We are frequently asked for opinions and input into many CNA projects.

(2) ORNAC's Standards Committee - Approval Section reviewed an O.R. nursing program.

The ORNAC executive was quite busy during the summer, as the preceding shows. The provincial presidents were busy as well, maintaining their organizations. The membership will be informed of all these activities when they attend provincial meetings.

The strength of our specialty lies with the well-informed nurse and the support each nurse gives to the organization through membership dues and attending meetings.

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Competency for the OR registered nurse

By Gloria Stephens

Competency requires knowledge for critical thinking and decision-making, plus skills which are process-oriented to perform the technical components of perioperative nursing. Both (knowledge and skills) are integral components of the nursing process. Competency, therefore, is defined as the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to perform functions of a professional registered nurse in the operating room, regardless of the practice setting. Competency is performance expectations.

The complexity of operating room nursing increases almost daily; therefore, a highly skilled RN is essential to effectively and safely perform the nursing activities within the scrub/circulating roles.

The nurse is accountable for providing continuous individualized perioperative care which requires knowledge from nursing, the sciences, and the humanities. The professional nurse is also accountable and responsible for maintaining competence in the knowledge and skills required to perform patient care functions. The O.R. nurse therefore develops a desire for life-long learning. How well this is accomplished depends on the individual nurse's attitudes and values toward her/his nursing specialty.

Developing competency statements

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) and provincial nursing associations are developing competency statements for the beginning nurse practitioner. Many interest groups are also developing competency statements for their particular specialty and the Operating Room Nurses Association of Canada is no exception. In fact, we have a couple of steps completed with the two standards publications and the Post Basic O.R. Nursing Programs - Approval Process.

We all realize that people perform at different levels, and levels determine how well we perform. Each agency should establish their own minimum standard expectation. As long as everyone attains this level, there will be a competent staff. Through inservice and continuous education, the staff will be encouraged to strive to higher levels based on their ability.

Briefly, these levels may be defined:

Level 1. - Performance requires supervision

Level 2. - Performance occurs independently
Level 3. - Performance is at a mastery level.

Obviously, before levels can be determined there must be criteria for each level and function that the nurse performs. Criteria identify the knowledge and skills required to make clinical decisions, take responsibility and to be accountable to the perioperative role. The Standards Committee is working on this now and hopefully will have a draft prepared for the ORNAC Board to review by the first of the new year.

Why develop competency statements ?

Defining competency statements (criteria) and levels of performance will:

- provide a standard criteria for the measuring of performance levels for the perioperative continuum;
- provide a guide for self-evaluation;
- assist in the development of staff nurse job description;
- reaffirm that only registered nurses (RNs) can be responsible for nursing care to the surgical patient during the perioperative period;
- facilitate the basis for orientation, continuing and formal education programs;
- enhance the professional image of OR nursing;
- enable the development of a precursor for specialization and a first step toward certification (which is the validation of professional achievement through an examination).

Once approved by the executive and board, a 2nd draft will be sent to different hospitals across Canada for their input. Following the required revisions, the document will be published for distribution.

Operating room nursing research will be another active role for ORNAC. Research is vitally required to provide evidence, support, and enhance operating room nursing practice for the registered nurse. Nurses should encourage, participate in, and support, interdisciplinary research and work/study projects.

Another future function/decision for ORNAC: a certification program for operating room nurses.

Standards, O.R. educational programs, research, and certification are all components of competency. ■