

EXHIBIT A: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE AORN STANDARDS, COMPETENCY STATEMENTS, AND CERTIFICATION

AORN's first "Standards of nursing practice: OR" were developed with the American Nurses Association (ANA) Division of Medical Surgical Practice and printed in 1975. In addition to these standards, AORN began publishing recommended practices in the technical aspects of perioperative nursing in March 1975. Subsequently, AORN developed a variety of programs and activities to assist perioperative registered nurses (RNs) to become aware of and use the standards to evaluate their professional practice and the recommended practices to initiate best practices in their settings.

The standards were revised after data were collected from practicing perioperative RNs to determine the applicability and usefulness of the standards. The resulting revision, titled "Standards of perioperative nursing practice," was published in 1981. These standards were augmented by "Standards of administrative nursing practice: OR" in 1982, the "Patient outcome standards for perioperative nursing" in 1985, and the "Quality and performance improvement standards for perioperative nursing" in 2004. In 2009, the standards collection was consolidated into one document with four exhibits that included historical perspectives, perioperative patient outcomes, perioperative explications for the ANA *Code of Ethics for Nurses*, and the quality and performance improvement standards.

The Nursing Practice Committee reviewed and updated the standards collection for 2010. Advanced practice RN measurements were added and the administrative standards were revised to align with the current ANA administrative standards. The outcome statements and the quality and performance improvement standards were removed from the exhibit section of the standards collection to facilitate flexibility in updating and distributing those documents. The content changes were posted on the AORN web site for public review and comment for 30 days. The AORN Board of Directors approved the revisions in October 2009.

The standards serve as the foundation for the AORN professional competency statements, which were first published by AORN in 1986. These statements are revised periodically to provide a means for perioperative nurses to validate and measure the quality of their practice. AORN developed compe-

tency statements for the perioperative advanced practice nurse, the perioperative care coordinator, and the RN first assistant in 1994, 1999, and 2002, respectively, to define other professional roles of the perioperative nurse. All four sets of competencies were published in a collection titled *Competencies for Perioperative Practice* in 2008. Together with the *Perioperative Nursing Data Set*, recognized by ANA in 1999 and published by AORN in 2000, these resources provide a comprehensive framework for creating job descriptions, performance appraisals, competency checklists, and credentialing documents that affirm and support the contribution of the perioperative RN in providing safe, effective patient care.

Certification in perioperative nursing (CNOR®) demonstrates the perioperative RN's individual commitment to excellence in practice in the clinical setting as well as AORN's ongoing commitment to fostering excellence in the clinical setting. The first perioperative RN certification program was approved by the AORN House of Delegates in 1978 to "enhance quality patient care" and to "demonstrate accountability to the general public for nursing practice." From this vote, a Certification Council was appointed by the AORN Board of Directors to oversee the development, direction, implementation, and evaluation of the entire certification process. The Council was incorporated in January 1980. Evolution in its organizational mission and structure resulted in name changes in 1985 and 1997. In 2005, the organization became the Competency and Credentialing Institute (CCI). Today, it offers credentialing, nursing competency assessment, education, and consulting on nursing competency issues.

AORN continues to encourage the achievement and maintenance of additional certifications applicable to various arenas of perioperative practice, such as first assisting (CRNFA®), administration, nursing informatics, and other subspecialty areas. Resolutions and statements adopted by the House of Delegates consistently reiterate the primacy of the Association's concern for quality and safety in patient care. Striving for excellence in practice, perioperative nurses actively participate in shaping the practice environment and identifying clinical and organizational indicators for quality patient care, patient and workplace safety, and performance improvement.

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