

## **Patient-Driven Interdisciplinary Practice**

### *Position Statement*

#### **Position**

Patients are best served when healthcare professionals practice to their full scope of practice, education and licensure, without barriers, to be full partners with physicians and work in an interdisciplinary, collaborative team that promotes safe, high-quality, value-driven, patient-centered care.<sup>1</sup> Safe, high-quality, value-driven, patient-centered care is not a value held by one profession or the responsibility of one healthcare professional, but rather is the culture of care embraced by the interdisciplinary, patient-driven team. The Captain of the Ship Doctrine is no longer relevant.<sup>2</sup> The AANA strongly encourages interdisciplinary collaboration among the patient's team utilizing effective communication, and leveraging the unique roles and responsibilities of all interdisciplinary team members.<sup>3-7</sup>

A collaborative interdisciplinary team is a group of healthcare professionals from diverse fields who partner and communicate to share expertise, knowledge, and skills and engage the patient, family and team in implementing the plan of care.<sup>8-10</sup> The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) recognizes the importance of interdisciplinary teams, collaboration and communication across the care continuum for care coordination that limits variability to improved health outcomes. Hierarchical, fractured, physician centric, scope of practice limiting, and disconnected healthcare delivery models have never been an effective means of care delivery.

#### **Collaborative Nurse Anesthesia Practice**

As an advanced practice registered nurses, Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA) are leaders and members of the interdisciplinary team who contribute their expertise and skills and integrate the core values of their profession and practice to optimize patient and team communication, patient safety, and evidence-based practice.<sup>11,12</sup> CRNAs provide anesthesia services for patients of all ages and acuity for a variety of specialties including, but not limited to, surgical, obstetric, diagnostic, therapeutic, and acute and chronic pain management. CRNAs are involved in every aspect of anesthesia services including, and not limited to, performing the pre-anesthesia patient assessment, obtaining informed consent for anesthesia administration, developing a plan for anesthesia administration, administering the anesthetic, monitoring and interpreting the patient's vital signs, and managing the patient throughout the surgery and post procedure through discharge. These services are provided in office, ambulatory care center, clinic, and hospital settings.<sup>11,13,14</sup> CRNAs offer leadership and expertise in the interdisciplinary team through relationships, clear communication, shared goal creation and decision-making, in addition to the delivery of responsive anesthesia and pain management services.

#### **Patient-Centered Care**

The interdisciplinary team engages the patient as an active, decision making member of the team. Patient-centered care is based on shared decision making that establishes a trusting partnership with the patient and family/caregiver through shared information, understanding patient expectations and needs, acknowledging patient preferences, identifying choices, discussing decisions, and agreeing on the next steps in care.<sup>15,16</sup>

## **Interdisciplinary Team-Based Healthcare**

Interdisciplinary collaboration improves coordination, communication, and the quality and safety of patient care.<sup>17,18</sup> Interdisciplinary collaborative practice, in which all health professionals practice to the full extent of their education, training, and credentials, optimizes the quality of care for patients and enhances the satisfaction of patient and healthcare professionals.<sup>19-22</sup>

Non-hierarchical communication that equally values the contribution of each team member exemplifies collaborative, interdisciplinary practice supported by a robust culture of safety that begins and is sustained at the leadership level of the organization.<sup>23</sup> Active collaboration involves ongoing interaction and exchange of knowledge, views and ideas that considers the perspectives of each team member, when possible, to develop the best solution.<sup>23,24</sup>

Leadership that is shared to pivot when one profession's expertise best addresses the patient's needs through coordination of interdisciplinary team members' contributions.<sup>25</sup> Limiting leadership to the physician limits the ability of the interdisciplinary team to address the patient needs in a timely manner for best outcomes. Successful collaboration does not require a boss, supervisor or subordinate relationship, but instead seeks leadership and accountability from each member for dynamic, shared communication and practice.<sup>23</sup> Effective leadership involves planning, team development, motivation, support of a safety culture, and the creation of a collaborative atmosphere across disciplines.<sup>25,26</sup>

## **Interdisciplinary Collaboration Through Education and Life-long Learning**

Interdisciplinary education and practice involves healthcare professionals from multiple specialties who learn about, from, and with each other.<sup>27,28</sup> CRNAs are often involved in helping to train other professionals in specific clinical skills, including anesthesiology residents (e.g., airway management).<sup>29</sup> While CRNAs may be able to train other professionals in specific clinical skills, CRNAs cannot educate other professionals in the entire practice of anesthesia if their scope of practice differs from that of CRNAs.<sup>29</sup>

For each healthcare professional, the culture of collaborative learning and practice optimally begins during education and continues throughout their career.<sup>17,30</sup> Teams who learn, train and work together improve and invest in each other.<sup>9</sup> Interdisciplinary education and training, either formal or in the workplace, can enhance the professional's understanding and appreciation of other clinical specialties; facilitate communication; break down misconceptions of other healthcare professionals; and encourage shared goals.<sup>3,14,26-28,31,32</sup> Executive level support and ongoing engagement fosters the culture of collaborative learning and practice by allowing professionals the time or compensation to attend teamwork educational initiatives and training.<sup>4</sup> Interdisciplinary education is important to initiate and sustain meaningful cultural changes within the healthcare organization.<sup>32</sup>

## **AANA Resources**

The AANA supports interdisciplinary patient-centered care and expands on the concept in multiple resource documents:

- [\*A Holistic Approach to Pain Management: Integrated, Multimodal, and Interdisciplinary Treatment, Position Statement\*](#)
- [\*Informed Consent for Anesthesia Care, Policy and Practice Considerations\*](#)
- [\*Code of Ethics for the Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist\*](#)

- [Professional Attributes of the Nurse Anesthetist, Practice Considerations](#)
- [Patient-Centered Perianesthesia Communication, Practice Considerations](#)
- [Promoting a Culture of Safety and Healthy Work Environment, Practice Considerations](#)
- [AANA Statement on the Most Cost-Effective and Safe Anesthesia Practice Models, Position Statement](#)

## Conclusion

As healthcare delivery moves toward a patient-centered approach, collaboration and interdisciplinary practice may be perceived differently depending on the practitioner's role and the social dynamics of the team.<sup>16,33</sup> Overcoming barriers to successful interdisciplinary patient-centered collaboration involves setting role and personal perceptions aside to engage and respect the unique skill set and expertise of each team member. This requires open, honest communication, supportive leadership, continuous quality improvement, and the deconstruction of hierarchies that may preclude others from speaking up.<sup>3,4</sup>

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