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AANA, Parkdale to Enhance Member Services on Substance Use Disorder

Substance use disorder (SUD) is an occupational hazard of disproportionately greater risk in the anesthesia profession than in other practice specialties due in part to the stresses of working in a demanding profession, increased availability of highly addictive medications, and possible environmental sensitization to the effects of such medications.¹⁻⁵ Across all of healthcare, an estimated 10 percent to 15 percent of clinicians, including anesthesia professionals, will misuse drugs or alcohol at some time during their career.⁴⁻⁶

The AANA has offered SUD-related support to its members since 1983. This program has grown into a robust network of State Peer Advisors (SPAs) facilitated by the Peer Assistance Advisors Committee (PAAC) and AANA staff.^{7,8} In October 2018, the AANA and Parkdale Solutions, LLC, entered into a partnership to enhance the services offered to CRNAs and student registered nurse anesthetists (SRNAs) who suffer from SUD or who have colleagues, friends, or coworkers they suspect of diverting drugs or of impairment due to drugs/alcohol. Parkdale Solutions, LLC, is the sister company of Parkdale Center for Professionals, which is a dual diagnosis treatment center for professionals in the early stages of recovery. Parkdale Solutions, LLC, was developed to assist professionals, organizations, hospitals, regulatory agencies, and licensing boards in developing evidence-based solutions to the SUD crisis throughout the country.

The primary goals of the AANA/Parkdale partnership include:

- A 24-hour live answer AANA Peer Assistance Helpline staffed by addiction professionals to improve access to help for SUD;
- Reduction of variability in the support received;
- Improved access to care by a validated treatment provider
- A formalized collaboration with AANA on education, treatment, aftercare, and reentry considerations specific to CRNAs and SRNAs.

This article explores perspectives on the partnership: AANA CEO Randall Moore, DNP, MBA, CRNA; PAAC Chair Linda Stone, DNP, CRNA; and from the Parkdale team, Executive Director Rodrigo

(Rigo) Garcia, MSN, MBA, CRNA, APN, ACIT, and Executive and Family Services Director Claudia Garcia, MBA, BSN, RN, CADAC II, LAC.

AANA Perspective

One of the primary benefits of this partnership is the 24-hour confidential live-answer AANA Peer Assistance Helpline (800-654-5167) for direct, consistent support and assistance resources. Moving to live-answer will connect more callers, such as those previously missed due to hang-ups or reluctance to leave a voicemail message. We anticipate that at least 200 additional calls per year will be answered thanks to the live-answer system.

“The AANA Peer Assistance program and helpline are available to all CRNAs and SRNAs and offer an invaluable service to those suffering from SUD and looking for resources, advice, and support. Additionally, the live-answer helpline will offer callers a variety of treatment center options to best meet their needs,” said Moore. “The AANA is on the forefront in offering these services to CRNAs and SRNAs. No other nursing or medical association has taken such steps to address and support those within the profession suffering from SUD. The AANA values the health and wellness of all CRNAs and SRNAs.”

PAAC and SPA Perspective

The AANA/Parkdale partnership follows the PAAC’s more than 35-year trajectory of offering proactive support for issues related to drugs and alcohol, impairment, and/or suspicion of drug diversion among nurse anesthetists. According to Stone, who joined the PAAC in 2009 and has served as chair for the past six years, “The PAAC worked with staff to fill access-to-help gaps and advance advocacy efforts resulting in the proposed partnership with Parkdale that was approved by the AANA Board of Directors in July 2018.” The PAAC is responsible for implementing program improvements that align with the PAAC’s Fiscal Year 2015-18 strategic plan to develop resources, address awareness, and expand partnerships within the communities of interest. “The PAAC has oversight of the AANA Peer Assistance

Helpline, now outsourced to Parkdale. PAAC will closely monitor the process and outcomes, including verification that callers are provided appropriate resources, such as a full list of approved treatment programs that CRNAs and SRNAs can select from, to ensure transparency and no conflicts of interest as Parkdale works with callers,” Stone said.

The partnership shifts the role of SPAs from responding to initial crisis calls to post-treatment follow-up care. The SPAs will focus on peer support throughout the recovery process, as well as monitor satisfaction and treatment outcomes through participant feedback. The SPAs will continue to expand educational outreach, build awareness, and participate at the state and local levels. Interested SPAs will also receive further training to respond to adverse event support calls. “The PAAC and SPA networks are as vital as ever in this partnership,” Stone said.

The partnership offers addiction treatment programs that have experience with treating healthcare professionals the opportunity to apply and be vetted for inclusion in the AANA’s newly defined two-tier classification system:

- Tier 1: AANA Strategic Alliance Treatment Programs meet the AANA’s most desirable evidence-based treatment criteria for anesthesia professionals, plus value-added Strategic Alliance criteria such as education, advocacy, research, outreach (i.e., Parkdale Center for Professionals with the hope for others to strive to meet this criterion, too).
- Tier 2: AANA Approved Treatment Programs meet the AANA’s most desirable evidence-based treatment criteria for anesthesia professionals (see www.AANA.com/TreatmentCenters).

Classification as an AANA Approved Treatment Program is an upgrade from the previous resource list of identified programs and involves working collaboratively with the PAAC, SPAs, and staff. All AANA Approved Treatment Programs will be required to connect CRNAs who finish their programs with AANA peer support and, on a quarterly basis, to share aggregate data on treatment outcomes specific to their CRNA and SRNA populations. The collaboration and the rich data collected from it will enable the AANA to further advance SUD recommendations.

Parkdale Perspective

Rigo and Claudia Garcia opened Parkdale Center for Professionals several years ago to help other clinicians and professionals affected by SUD. Co-founder and Medical Director David Cummins, MD, FASAM, is board certified in addiction medicine and emergency

medicine and has extensive experience in treating patients with SUD. Cummins has helped develop a comprehensive program that uses treatments and cutting edge alternative therapies, focusing on prevention, treatment, long-term monitoring, advocacy, and reentry into the workplace.

Rigo Garcia describes the partnership: “The value added services we provide to CRNAs and SRNAs include immediate employee/ family member intervention with a dedicated consequence mitigation team; anesthesia-specific case management; comprehensive dual-diagnosis management of the impaired CRNA or SRNA; family support and counseling; ongoing support with the CRNA’s employer, Board of Nursing, and alternative to discipline program to navigate regulatory and monitoring issues; assistance with short- and long-term disability filing; and financial assistance/scholarships for nurse anesthetists.”

- Rigo Garcia has worked with the AANA since the inception of the Parkdale Center to create an addiction treatment program following AANA recommendations specific to CRNAs and SRNAs

and Rigo has helped the PAAC and the SPAs on critical peer support calls to bring CRNAs from hazardous and vulnerable situations to safe, swift admittance to an addiction treatment program. Rigo has primary responsibility for the AANA Peer Assistance Helpline.

The Garcias have presented at AANA SPA Workshops and the Annual Congress, as well as across the country, advocating for workplace polices for prevention as well as

safely handling SUD and drug diversion, situations. Claudia Garcia, a registered nurse and licensed addiction counselor who works closely with families affected by addiction, states that: “Family support is often the cornerstone of a successful and sustainable recovery process. However, family members must first maintain balance and wellness personally before they are positioned and able to effectively help their loved one. Without this self-care and preservation, the entire family unit would be at risk of falling victim to the progression of the disease.”

Parkdale works closely with employers and Boards of Nursing, advocates for alternative to discipline models, provides education at AANA and related organization meetings, supports and develops safe reentry into practice for CRNAs, and supports the Anesthetists in Recovery (AIR) community in addition to increasing the social network of recovering CRNAs and SRNAs through multiple platforms.

For more information about the AANA’s Peer Assistance Program and the AANA Parkdale Partnership visit www.AANA.com/AboutPeerAssistance.

**Help is Available for all
CRNAs/SRNAs**
AANA Peer Assistance Helpline 24/7
confidential live support and resources
(800) 654-5167

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