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 Program.”
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 AANAs 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 AANAs 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.

**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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