

**From:** Lisa Carlson  
**Sent:** Saturday, January 09, 2016 10:57 AM  
**To:** Briel, Ron  
**Subject:** Surgical tech licensure

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Mr. Ron Briel, Program Manager  
Division of Public Health, Licensure Unit  
Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services  
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Mr. Briel,

My name is Lisa Carlson and I have been a certified surgical technologist (CST) for 3 years but received on the job training (OJT) for 4 years prior. I went to school because I felt that I was not doing my best and doctors were not entirely satisfied with my work in their rooms. After I went to school my world changed. I felt proud, respected, knowledgeable, and felt I was able to help my doctors. Before school, I was just doing what I was told which was handing instruments and holding retractors, which is defiantly not all we do. After I graduated, I felt ready to help and was able to be that extra hand our doctors needed. They all want me in their rooms and they respect me for my quality of work. For me going to school was the best thing I could have done. I understand anatomy and asepsis like I never did before. Somethings are hard to teach on the job and that is why my education has been so important. High workloads make it hard to do our jobs and conduct proper training. It takes well over a year for proper training and our doctors expect them to be able to jump in and help. Our doctors are willing to teach but we have a high turnover of OJT surgical techs, because of the nature of the job, the doctors are getting pretty frustrated. Our OJT techs are on their own after only three months because our workload demands they be ready.

We have a very important, high stress job which centers around assisting the doctors with surgery. If I do something wrong in surgery, our patients suffer. If I do not clean or sterilize an instrument correctly, our patient's safety is in jeopardy. I do not know why a surgical tech in Nebraska do not need to be licensed. My hair stylist needs a license but not the person helping preform surgery? I know in my part of the state it is hard to get CST's in to come to the hospitals. But since CST's do not need a license, my hospital does not have to put much effort into advertising for job openings. Plus the hospital does not have to pay the OJT as much as a CST. I feel that if application 407 passes, more schools will open and more CST's will be available to this area. Most importantly patient care and quality of service will be greatly improved, which should be our number one priority. A more well trained and educated staff will keep great doctors at our hospital which will bring in more patients. Again this goes back to quality of service, what hospital would not want highly trained, highly qualified CST's working for them? As a patient my overall opinion of a hospital would be greatly improved knowing that the staff was well training. We are starting spine procedures in a month and that is scary to me because no one but me is trained for these type of operations, yet we are going to have a

less than one year OJT techs help with a patients spinal cord. In these cases why is patient safety and care again put on the back burner. I also feel like the profession of surgical technology will only get bigger and stronger if this passes.

Thank you for your time and consideration on this matter.

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