

Dear Ron,

I wanted to provide some additional information that may assist the technical review committee as they consider the application regarding creation of a license for Surgical Technologists in the state of Nebraska. I have been a Certified Surgical Technologist for almost 10 years and am currently employed at Southeast Community College as an instructor in the Surgical Technology program. I work primarily in the clinical site with our students as they complete their clinical experience requirements.

Surgical technologists play an integral role as a member of the operating room team. Their main focus is assisting the surgical team to ensure the surgical procedure is performed as efficiently as possible by anticipating the needs of the team while maintaining the highest level of aseptic technique to ensure the patient does not acquire a surgical site infection. Surgical technologists are the only member of the surgical team that is specifically trained in aseptic technique and the methods that should be utilized to minimize the patient's risk of contracting a postoperative wound infection. Their attention to making sure that all instruments and supplies that are utilized during the procedure are sterile during the preparation for the case and throughout the performance of the procedure directly affects the outcomes upon completion for the patients. Surgical site infections can cause a case that would have otherwise been considered a success to be seen as a failure by the patient and their family. However, the surgical technologist remains the only member of the immediate operating room team that does not have established education of competency requirements in the state of Nebraska.

Education from an accredited surgical technology program is critical to provide the surgical technologist with this vital knowledge in aseptic technique that directly affects patient outcomes and hospital readmissions. There are over 500 accredited surgical technology programs across the country, two of which are located here in Nebraska and 9 of which are offered online. There truly is no excuse for a surgical technologist to be on the job trained with nothing more than a high school education. The surgical patients of Nebraska deserve to know that everyone in their operating room has been properly educated for the role that they are serving in. These patients are in their most vulnerable state where they do not have a voice to speak up for themselves. They are trusting that every member of the team has their best interest at heart in every step of their care and that everyone has the base knowledge to provide them with the best outcomes possible.

The creation of a license for surgical technologists in the state will also help to prevent the potential that currently exists for the practice of surgical technologists in the state as it is conducted on a daily basis to be altered dramatically. Each day in operating rooms across the state, surgeons are directing the activity of the surgical technologist. They are telling them what instrument to hand them next, where to hold a specific retractor and where to move an endoscope. However, this delegation of these medical tasks and functions is contrary to the 1898 case ruling from Howard Paul vs. the State of Nebraska which states that a medical doctor cannot delegate to unlicensed personnel. It has been claimed that that practice of the surgical technologist is delegated by the circulating nurse under the Nurse Practice Act however when the surgeon is present in the OR room this statement is false. The surgeon and the surgical technologist stand together scrubbed in up at the sterile field while the circulating nurse stands in the unsterile areas and is responsible for creating the documentation of the surgical procedure. Often times the circulator is standing with their back to the procedure that is being conducted at which time the surgeon is delegating tasks to the surgical technologists. This interaction between the surgeon and the surgical technologist as it is presently occurring must continue to be allowed in order to prevent

hardship that could occur related to the alteration of who the surgical technologist is allowed receive delegation from.

Regulation of the profession of surgical technology through the creation of a license is critical to ensuring that the State of Nebraska is doing everything possible to ensure that surgical patients throughout the state are being protected from the potential harm that can result from uneducated surgical team members being present during the procedure.

Thank you for your consideration of this proposal and recognition of the opportunity to improve outcomes for surgical patients throughout the state.

Sincerely,

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