

From: Caroline Rezac
Sent: Thursday, March 21, 2015
To: Briel, Ron
Subject: regulation of Surgical First Assistants and Surgical Technologists

Dear Ron,

I am a Certified Surgical First Assistant for the Women's Clinic of Lincoln, PC. These surgeons have employed me for 25 years of which 19 of them have been as a Certified Surgical First Assistant. Prior to my employment at the Women's Clinic I worked at Bryan Medical Center East for 14 years as a Certified Surgical Technologist.

The purpose of this email is to provide you with any information I can in order for the technical review committee to consider the application for regulation of these professions.

It has been very frustrating not only for myself but also my employers that there is not a clear definition of the profession of Certified Surgical First Assistant or Certified Surgical Technologist in the state of Nebraska although there is on the National level.

I attended Southeast Community College and was educated through the Surgical Technology program in 1976. We truly are the only members of the surgical team that are specifically trained in aseptic techniques and methods that should be utilized to reduce and or eliminate patient risk of postoperative infection. We are responsible for making sure instruments and supplies are sterile, along with maintaining a sterile field throughout the entire set up and procedure. Not only are we responsible for the sterile environment, we organize and keep track of all countable items such as sponges, instruments, needles and any other items that need to be accounted for.

We are able to assist anesthesia, position patients, prep patients, drape the patient according to the correct procedure, account for all counted items, suction, retraction and passing instruments and any medications needed to the surgeon. Patient safety is our number one priority with a goal of no complications for our patients so they can get back to the life that they knew prior to surgery. I am a valuable member of the surgical team and feel our patients have the right to well trained regulated health care providers.

I am responsible for keeping my Certification and BLS current, as well as my Malpractice liability insurance. I currently have privileges to practice at Bryan Medical Centers East and West, Saint Elizabeth's (CHI,) and Lincoln Surgery Hospital.

I feel as a Certified Surgical First Assistant I not only am helping the patient return to their normal activities with reduced risk of infections and or complications but that I also help reduce the cost of the surgical procedure as a whole.

As a qualified Certified Surgical First Assistant I am Nationally certified and credentialed to help with tasks called upon to perform under the direction of a surgeon that contributes to the efficiency and safe care of the surgical patient. This includes suturing, skin closure, and manipulating tissue. These task allow my surgeons to write post-op orders as we finish up in timely manner decreasing operating room times and the amount of time a patient is under anesthesia. It has also eliminated the need of another surgeon in many cases, therefore, eliminating the assistant fee that the patient would have incurred.

When a surgeon has a team that he works with consistently it truly reduces frustration and time in the operating room that ultimately benefits the patient. The surgeon remains in the Surgical Suite while the Certified Surgical Fist Assistant is finishing the final stages of the surgical procedure. Currently the surgeon has to complete these stages himself which involves more of his time, causing frustration for everyone involved. By utilizing all members of the surgical team to their fullest capabilities we increase our efficiency, which in turn decreases the patient's time in the surgical setting.

Again I hope to convey how important the role of Certified Surgical First Assistants and Certified surgical Technologist are in the surgical arena and the importance of regulation.

Sincerely,

Caroline Rezac CST/CSFA
Women's Clinic of Lincoln, P.C.
220 Lyncrest Drive
Lincoln, NE 68510
rezaclincoln@aol.com
(402)304-4358