



GUIDELINES FOR THE ETHICAL STANDARDS OF THE ANESTHESIOLOGIST ASSISTANT

Preamble

Membership in the American Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants (AAAA) is a privilege of those anesthesiologist assistants (AA) who are dedicated to the basic ethical principles of health care. The standards contained in this document describe a code of conduct with respect only to an AA's professional activities.

Statement of Values

Anesthesiologist assistants are expected to act both legally and morally. They are responsible for knowing and understanding the laws governing their practice and the ethical responsibilities of being a health care professional.

The practice of anesthesiology involves many complex factors relating to the standards of patient care. As such, the Academy recommends its members adhere to the basic set of ethical standards outlined below:

- I.** The AA shall, while caring for the patient, regard responsibility to the patient as paramount, thereby putting the interests of the patient foremost and acting as a patient-advocate.
- II.** The AA shall be dedicated to providing competent medical care with compassion and respect for human dignity.
- III.** The AA shall maintain standards of professionalism in all patient interactions and always acting in the best interests of the patient.
- IV.** The AA shall respect the law.
- V.** The AA shall respect the rights of the patients under their care, colleagues and other health care professionals with whom they interact and shall safeguard the confidentiality of patients' medical and personal information within the constraints of the law.
- VI.** The AA shall uphold the right of every patient to the ethical right to self-determination, and therefore not coerce any portion of the decision-making process and shall facilitate the informed consent process. AAs shall be committed to the concept of shared

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decision-making, which involves assisting patients in making decisions that account for medical, situational, and personal factors.

- VII.** Anesthesiologist assistants shall have the inherent responsibility to observe and report any potentially negligent practices or conditions which compromise patient safety or present a hazard to health care facility personnel.
- VIII.** Anesthesiologist assistants render high-quality patient care without prejudice as to race, religion, age, sex, nationality, disability, social, economic, or insurance status.
- IX.** Anesthesiologist assistants should not misrepresent, directly or indirectly, their skills, training, professional credentials, title, or identity.
- X.** Anesthesiologist assistants shall strive to maintain a spirit of cooperation with other health care professionals, their organizations, and the general public.

Medical Direction

Anesthesiologist assistants' practice encompasses a unique relationship involving the AA, the anesthesiologist, and the patient. AAs practice with anesthesiologist medical direction in the Anesthesia Care Team (ACT). Within the ACT, an anesthesiologist and AA work together to provide high-quality care in the belief that the interests of patient safety are best served with an anesthesiologist's involvement in the delivery of every anesthetic. The responsibility for medical direction lies with the anesthesiologist, who may then delegate aspects related to the implementation of an anesthetic plan to the AA. Delegation of any aspect of patient care to an AA is at the discretion of the anesthesiologist, in accordance with established state regulation and local credentialing guidelines.

Medical direction should include ongoing communication between the anesthesiologist and the AA regarding patient care and management.