



AORN Launches National Campaign to Remove Hazardous Smoke from Operating Rooms

“Go Clear” Award Program Promotes Surgical Teams’ Work in Safe Settings

The Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) today announced the launch of the “Go Clear” campaign, a three year national health education effort to help surgical team members and hospital administrators reduce and eliminate surgical smoke in operating rooms. Surgical smoke, also known as plume, can be a byproduct of electrosurgical and laser devices which are used in over 85% of 24 million procedures performed annually. The campaign is sponsored by Medtronic through the AORN Foundation.

The need to evacuate and appropriately filter surgical smoke is being recognized around the world as countries move to provide a safer environment for both perioperative personnel and patients. Using an electrosurgery device on one gram of tissue is akin to inhaling the smoke from 6 unfiltered cigarettes in 15 minutes. While the long-term effects for health care workers exposed to surgical smoke is still unknown, there is an extended list of short-term effects. For example, perioperative nurses experience twice the incidence of many respiratory problems as compared to the general population.

“We created the Go Clear Award program to give surgical team members and administrators the tools they need to establish and maintain a safe surgical setting,” said Linda Groah, MSN, RN, CNOR, NEA-BC, FAAN, Executive Director/CEO, AORN. “At this time, there is very little awareness about smoke hazards and there is too little consistency in safe practices. We need to turn that around.”

“Medtronic has a long-standing history of arming clinicians with the right products and solutions to help keep them safe while providing care,” said Donna Watson, MSN, RN, CNOR, FNP, a past AORN national president and director for Medtronic Professional Affairs and Clinical Education. “We’re proud to partner with AORN to raise awareness of the hazards of surgical smoke. Together we can make the operating room safer and healthier for surgical team members, which will ultimately lead to better patient care.”

AORN’s evidence-based Guidelines for Perioperative Practice recommend “potential hazards associated with surgical smoke generated in the practice setting should be identified, and safe practices established.” There are currently no specific OSHA standards for laser/electrosurgery plume

hazards but the agency [recommends](#) employers be aware of this emerging problem and advise employees of the hazards of laser smoke. According to OSHA law, all [workers](#) have a right to a safe workplace and the law requires employers to provide their employees with safe and healthful workplaces.

About The Go Clear Award Program

The AORN Go Clear Award program is a comprehensive surgical smoke-free recognition program to ensure a smoke-free environment wherever surgical smoke is generated to protect patient and worker safety. Components of the program include testing, interprofessional education, gap analysis, and compliance monitoring. Pretesting evaluates the perioperative team's current knowledge of what is surgical smoke, the hazards of surgical smoke, and smoke evacuation equipment. A gap analysis measures the current percentage of surgical procedures where surgical smoke is evacuated, the number of smoke evacuators, and current usage of smoke evacuation soft goods (ie, smoke evacuator tubing, smoke evacuator filters, in-line filters, laparoscopic filters).

When a hospital, ambulatory surgery center, or office-based practice commits to the Go Clear program, they will utilize the free Go Clear resources to reduce and eliminate the smoke hazards. As benchmarks are achieved, the facility will receive the Go Clear Award. Go Clear campaign materials will be available in August, 2016 at www.aorn.org/goclear.

About AORN

AORN represents the interests of more than 160,000 perioperative nurses by providing nursing education, standards, and practice resources—including the peer-reviewed, monthly publication AORN Journal—to enable optimal outcomes for patients undergoing operative and other invasive procedures. AORN's 40,000 registered nurse members manage, teach, and practice perioperative nursing, are enrolled in nursing education or are engaged in perioperative research. Its members include perioperative nurses who work in hospitals, ambulatory and office-based settings and in related business and industry sectors. AORN's mission is to promote safety and optimal outcomes for patients undergoing operative and other invasive procedures by providing practice support and professional development opportunities to perioperative nurses.

For more information, visit www.aorn.org.