AORN President Missi Merlino – Follow Up Report from the 2019 Forum

We heard you last year when you suggested that we needed to provide more assistance to help the first-time attendees navigate Expo. So, this year AORN developed a new Expo-specific mentoring program to connect conference veterans, whom we are calling our Expo Experts, with first-time attendees.

Expo Experts were matched with their mentees and provided a tool kit of resources to assist with orientation. At the annual conference, we were scheduled to have a first-time attendee lounge open and staffed the first three days of the conference. Mentors were invited to visit the lounge to meet with their mentees and help others seeking information. A networking meetup for the Expo Experts and First-time Attendees was also scheduled to take place during the Block Party following the Opening Ceremony. Additionally, we planned to take the learnings from the Expo mentor program to potentially expand the mentor program to our entire membership.

AORN’s eGuidelines Plus helps perioperative nurses resolve day-to-day clinical issues, guide quality initiatives and improve patient care. The Nursing Practice Team has expanded eGuidelines Plus into areas such as endoscopy, interventional radiology and cardiac cath labs by providing dozens of illustrated “At A Glance” guides with step by step instructions for dozens of procedures.

In February 2019, AORN launched a new Leader Member category. With over 25% of our membership who are managers or above, this category was designed for perioperative nurse leaders who need solutions beyond clinical challenges, like staffing and budgeting, while also supporting your professional passion. To date, we have ~1,800 leader members, including ~60% who are brand new members. Leader benefits include The Periop Leader monthly blog, free and discounted leadership events, free online leadership courses and in-service topics, and a leader only ORNL group. Our efforts to recruit leader members include social engagement, lead generation campaigns, and ongoing outreach to the leader audience. Additionally, we continue to refine the leader member offerings through ongoing feedback, exploring new benefits, and improved member experience.
AORN heard your concerns about **distractions and noise** (such as the use of cell phones that occurs in the operating rooms. We know that these distractions do not serve a clinical function and should be minimized to create a safer environment for patients and perioperative team members. To that end, AORN’s **Position Statement on Managing Distractions and Noise During Perioperative Patient Care** was revised and passed by a special business meeting in March.

We also heard great discussion on implementing **surgical smoke** evacuation and how to take advantage of AORN’s **Go Clear Award**. I’m pleased to report that at this time we have 40 new hospitals in the program, and we’ve made great progress in both our Go Clear hospitals and in a handful of state capitols with education and awareness around the continuing hazards of surgical smoke exposure to the entire surgical team.

You had several comments and questions about AORN’s activities with **schools of nursing**. All schools of nursing in California, Washington, Oregon, Nevada, Utah, and Arizona were sent a letter inviting their students to attend the AORN Global Surgical Conference & Expo at no charge. Tuesday was identified as student day which included a two-hour educational session designed for the students, a facilitated tour on the exhibit floor, invitation to attend concurrent sessions, and the general session.

In addition, **Introduction to Perioperative Nursing**, was introduced in November 2019 to schools of nursing. Introduction to Perioperative Nursing is an undergraduate course for nursing students and provides essential knowledge of pre-, intra-, and post-operative practices across the continuum of care for surgical patients. The course replaced “Fundamental of Perioperative Nursing,” The program consists of 17 short interactive modules. Some of the ways the course has been integrated into the curriculum are as the first course for all first-year students, an elective, as a component of the curriculum over three quarters, and as a capstone project. There are 22 schools of nursing using the program.
Perioperative Care for the Geriatric Patient created a lot of discussion last year. Preparing for the Silver Tsunami was scheduled to be presented during the 2020 Global Surgical Conference. Perioperative Care of the Older Adult was updated and explores the physiological, cognitive/psychosocial and sociological changes associated with aging. The course is part of the Periop Mastery Program.

Finally, a course was developed titled Perioperative Foundations for Sterile Processing Technicians. This course consists of 8 modules and covers the pre-cleaning, cleaning, disinfection, and sterilization of minimally invasive surgical instruments and devices. Also, included with the course are job descriptions, competencies, and a 50-item final exam. The course will be available mid-April 2020.