Good evening Colleagues.

It was one year ago that I stood before you and spoke about the challenges as well as the opportunities facing our association and our membership. I recognized the significant and impactful work of our past leaders. I emphasized the strength of AORN, and I encouraged a focus on value and partnerships.

Today, I, virtually, stand before you and have a similar message.

I first affirm to you that AORN is strong, resilient and resolute. This is only because you, our members, embody those same characteristics.

To say that the past few months and weeks have brought unprecedented challenges to our nation and our world would be an understatement. AORN recognizes that our members are also feeling the impacts of this global crisis.

There is an immediate need for up-to-date information related to patient care implications due to the COVID19 pandemic. AORN has harnessed its resources to make available important and relevant information to our members in a timely fashion via multiple channels: the web site, town hall webinars, email distribution or publications.
Global healthcare systems look to associations like AORN to assist with recommendations for best practices in these circumstances. This response will continue to be vital to support our members, their patients and the national response to this pandemic.

The reality is that this experience has changed us and will continue to change our nation and our association.

This work is ongoing and compels us to rethink our organization’s position, role, relationships, and areas of influence. Our response and strategy is not necessarily to recreate what AORN was before coronavirus; it is to make certain we are focused on rebuilding and ensuring AORN becomes stronger and well-equipped to face and conquer future challenges.

Some of these efforts in 2020 include:

- Continued strengthening of eGuidelines Plus
- We’ll add *AORN Accreditation Assistant* for helping facilities use the AORN Guidelines and Tools to meet the Joint Commission standards.
- And *A Clinical Practice Support Hyperlinks* feature within AORN Syntegrity that integrates facility EHR systems with the eGuidelines Plus platform to provide precise and specific, evidence-based AORN recommendations at the point of care.
- The expansion of our Procedures at a Glance will include procedures often performed in a procedure room, including endoscopy, cardiac catheterization, interventional radiology and electrophysiology labs.
- And eGuidelines Plus will provide AORN Members access to AORN member webinars, Journal articles and Tool Kits from within the eGuidelines plus website.

The theme for AORN Global Surgical Conference & Expo 2021 – “*Our Shared Purpose: Safe Surgery Together*” – is focused on our strength and mission.

My priorities for 2020, in addition to ensuring a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, are to ensure we are strengthening and supporting member engagement, perioperative nursing practice, nursing education, nursing research and our interdisciplinary partnerships.
For Member Engagement

2020 is a year of engagement for nursing. The World Health Organization’s designation of 2020 as the Year of the Nurse and Midwife has brought much deserved recognition to the nursing profession. AORN is committed to using this year to catalyze recognition of our members and their contributions to the field of perioperative nursing.

One significant engagement and recognition effort is related to the new Fellowship in Perioperative Nursing.

Achievement of the Fellow of AORN (FAORN) designation is an honor as it recognizes individuals who have demonstrated significant contributions to our profession as well as a capacity to continue to develop our Association. These individuals will represent the drivers of the future of our AORN.

Individuals can apply to be Fellows of AORN during 2020 and will be inducted as the inaugural class of Fellows of AORN at Global Surgical Conference & Expo 2021 in Orlando, Florida. This will be an exciting opportunity for recognition of members’ ongoing commitment to AORN.

Perioperative Nursing Practice

Support of nursing practice includes enhancement of our products as well as a focus on the environment in which perioperative nurses provide care.

One of the important practice issues related to the perioperative environment is workplace civility. In 2020 I have established a task force to assess our position on the issues related to workplace civility and bullying as well as make recommendations to the board of directors for resources to support perioperative nurses. This task force will be a unique partnership with colleagues outside of AORN. It will include representation of nurses from the perianesthesia practice setting, this will be a collaboration between ASPAN and AORN. This emphasizes another important characteristic of AORN – partnering. I anticipate the work of this task force to be an important step forward in further supporting a healthy workplace for perioperative and perianesthesia nurses.
Advancement of nursing education has been a priority for AORN as well as our profession particularly since the publication of the Institute of Medicine’s 2010 report on the Future of Nursing.

Since this report the numbers of nurses with baccalaureate degrees has increased, we have also seen a significant increase in the number of nurses earning advanced education, masters and doctoral degrees. This has been incredibly positive for our profession and will continue to make a strong impact.

An opportunity for AORN and perioperative nursing is to help provide guidance for how the role of the Doctor of Nursing Practice or DNP can best support nursing practice in our setting. There is wide variation in how DNPs are being utilized across specialties; it is important that this vital resource be used most effectively to elevate nursing practice.

I have established a task force on the role of the DNP in the Perioperative Setting to examine how the role of the DNP enhances nursing practice and supports the care of patients undergoing surgical and other invasive procedures.

**Nursing Research**

As we discuss practice and education advancements, the reality is that the backbone of our ability to make progress is dependent on development of our science. This requires an intentional focus on nursing research.

2020 will be a year for AORN to strengthen this work. I have commissioned the Nursing Research Committee to develop a strategic guide for advancing nursing research with a goal of significantly increasing research activity and rigor in the perioperative specialty. The impact of increasing research activity in perioperative nursing will be tremendous and long lasting; this is work that will enhance perioperative care for decades.
AORN has for many years been a leader in supporting and developing interdisciplinary partnerships. The landscape in which we find ourselves this spring has provided new opportunities to partner, well outside the perioperative setting.

Because AORN has a core competency in supporting teams we are well prepared to help not only perioperative nurses, but all members of the healthcare team respond to our current situation and prepare for future challenges. As I mentioned the Task Force on Workplace Civility will be an opportunity for us to enhance and strengthen our partnership with ASPAN and the ANA.

Our leaders, past and current, have worked to position AORN to be THE resource for evidence-based practice and education for perioperative nursing. We have used as our guide our mission, vision and values. It is this focus that continuously reminds us who we are – who AORN is…

As I have thought about our Association and our membership over this past year, and particularly these past several months – I have been humbled to think of the number of patients’ lives that are impacted by our members every day. The significance of this impact is overwhelming and represents the importance of our association within the nursing profession and in healthcare.

Because of this I am confident that AORN will not only recover from these challenges but excel through them.

This year’s theme “Our shared purpose: Safe Surgery Together” is a fitting resolution for AORN. These challenging times are demonstrating how much we need each other. Our focus remains on patient and caregiver safety. The battle we are facing is significant and the recovery may be long – through this our focus remains steady.

I started my comments this evening by recognizing AORN’s strength, resilience and resoluteness.

I finish by emphasizing that AORN is constantly in a state of transformation, preparing for what the future needs of us. Our directive is to not prepare for what is or has been, but what is ahead.
I would like to thank the leaders that have gone before me for being amazing stewards of our association.

I would like to thank President Merlino and the 2019-2020 Board of Directors for demonstrating leadership and strength through unprecedented times.

I would like to thank Linda Groah and the AORN headquarters team for responding to dynamics none of us would have chosen.

I most of all want to thank you, our members, for your dedication to patient care, your commitment to our association and for your confidence in me to lead. I commit to you that we will lead with transparency and a focused intention on transforming into the AORN of the future that is strong and sustainable.

Thank you and good evening.