A COMPETENCY BASED ORIENTATION AND CREDENTIALING PROGRAM
for the
UNLICENSED ASSISTIVE PERSONNEL
in the
PERIANESTHESIA SETTING

INTRODUCTION

Mosby’s Medical Dictionary defines Unlicensed Assistive Personnel (UAP) as “health care workers who are not licensed but are prepared to provide certain elements of patient care under the supervision of a registered nurse.” This group of individuals includes but is not limited to nurse aides, assistants, attendants, orderlies or technicians.

The UAP can provide a valuable adjunct to professional nursing care in the perianesthesia setting. Successful integration of licensed and unlicensed caregivers relies on adequate preparation of both the registered nurse, as supervisor and delegator and the unlicensed assistant as an informed and competent performer of assigned tasks. Validating skills and knowledge through a competency based orientation program and subsequent follow-up with periodic credentialing ensures that basic educational and performance skills are met.

Candidates for unlicensed assistants in the perianesthesia setting should display the qualities of good communication skills, integrity, problem-solving skills, self-motivation, accountability, technical adaptation and the ability to follow directions.

What does competency mean? According to The Joint Commission, the words competence and competency are synonymous. Competency is defined as “a determination of an individual’s capability to perform up to defined expectations.” It involves knowledge, skill and critical thinking.

Speers and Ziolkowski define competence as “the capacity to perform job functions by an individual who has the knowledge, skills, behaviors and personal characteristics necessary to function well in a given situation.” A competency based orientation is built on the idea that it is not enough for a person to identify that he or she can perform particular skills and activities, but can actually demonstrate and perform the skills and activities.

Knowledge is defined by The Joint Commission as the preparation for performance or the information required to meet the performance expectation for specific situations and is obtained by the completion of course work, written tests, licensure and experience. Skill is the demonstration of performance or the ability to do something well. It may be confirmed by direct observation or the outcomes of the performance. Knowledge does not necessarily result in skill, but skill is evidence of knowledge.

A competency based orientation program provides a structured, comprehensive approach to the orientation process which ensures that employees can perform the activities required in their daily roles. The validation of staff competency results in improved patient outcomes and satisfaction, enhanced learning and the provision of safe patient care.

This manual will address the specific critical elements of perianesthesia care appropriate for unlicensed assistants in the preoperative, postoperative and ambulatory settings. The program has been modeled after ASPAN’s A Competency Based Orientation and Credentialing Program and may be used in total as modules or modified to meet specific institutional practice guidelines.
Chapter 1

Each competency contains:
- Competency statement and criteria which supports the statement
- Bibliography for use as a resource to assist the UAP in completing the competency requirements
- Post test
- Documentation tool

Other learning tools that may be considered to enhance orientation are:
- Training videotapes or DVDs
- Skills stations
- Lectures and/or demonstrations by the nursing staff

This program is not intended to be all encompassing, but will provide a basic framework for unlicensed assistant practice in the perianesthesia setting.

References


Bibliography

