

AORN finds innovative ways to support members during the COVID-19 pandemic

Lisa Croke, Managing Editor

The COVID-19 crisis has challenged the AORN community in many ways, but has had a tremendous effect on perioperative nurses who are experiencing pay cuts and furloughs, being redeployed to other care areas, or learning new approaches to manage patients. As the pandemic continues to evolve, along with workload requirements for perioperative nurses, AORN leaders and staff members have focused on anticipating and responding to members' changing needs and finding innovative ways to provide them the information and tools that they need to keep themselves and their patients safe.

At the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the AORN staff nurses listened to perioperative nurses to learn about their challenges and struggles and focused on finding ways to help address them. They developed a COVID-19 resource center, a page on the AORN website that provides supporting resources and guidance. They also created webinars to address such topics as infection prevention, self-care and stress management strategies, preparing for the return to elective surgeries, and how The Joint Commission survey process will evolve. In addition, they provided support during extended AORN Nurse Consult Line operating hours and via ORNurseLink. Finally, they developed the playbook *Perioperative Care of the COVID-19 Patient* that provides comprehensive strategies to help perioperative teams safely manage their patients from preadmission to discharge in the era of COVID-19.

AORN's leaders and staff members shifted their focus from hosting live events to developing different ways for members to get their credit hours and stay up-to-date on the latest findings and techniques. After the cancellation of the face-to-face AORN Global Surgical Conference & Expo 2020, AORN embarked on a unique endeavor: the launch of the first-ever Virtual AORN Expo. This three-month remote conference was free for members and offered a library of education to stream, including newly developed

sessions on COVID-19, and associated continuing education credit hours. It also provided a virtual Expo Hall of products and solutions for the surgical suite and facilitated networking and collaboration opportunities among the more than 8,000 attendees.

The teams at AORN also launched additional virtual offerings, such as the Virtual Nurse Leadership Seminar, which focused on helping nurses lead their teams through change; the Prep for CNOR Live that covers all exam areas and provides virtual interaction with expert instructors and peer networking; and Return-to-Work education packages to aid nurses transitioning to the OR from another department or after an extended absence by providing quick refreshers on important perioperative topics. The upcoming Virtual OR Excellence, which launches Oct. 22 and runs through Nov. 20, 2020 and is free for AORN members and subscribers to *Outpatient Surgery Magazine*, will provide OR leaders with practical and innovative surgical solutions from top OR experts through live and on-demand education sessions, the opportunity to talk to company representatives during the live exhibit hall hours, and the ability to connect with other OR leaders to discuss challenges and new ideas.

Conclusion

When the COVID-19 pandemic began, it became paramount for AORN to quickly pivot to anticipate and respond to the needs of members and find innovative ways to support them, including by developing new resources and virtual events to help them stay up-to-date and learn about strategies to keep themselves and their patients safe. All of AORN's tools, including the items mentioned in this editorial, can be found on the AORN (<http://www.aorn.org>) and eGuidelines+ (<https://aornguidelines.org/>) websites. Members can contact the Experience Services team by e-mail (custsvc@aorn.org) or phone (800-755-2676) to ask questions and share ideas about how AORN can further support them.