

THE EDGE



NEWSLETTER OF THE NATIONAL BOARD OF SURGICAL TECHNOLOGY AND SURGICAL ASSISTING
SPRING 2014

President's Message	1	Sneak Peek	5
CEO Corner	2	Nuggets	6
Partnership Corner	3	Live from the NBSTSA!	7
Celebrating 40 Years	4	Upcoming Meetings	8

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE **COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION ACROSS DISCIPLINES**

Communication and collaboration often begin in some of the most unexpected and unpredictable forms. On many occasions you are left with the questions, "What are they doing?" or "What an odd relationship?" What we fail to think of is how healthy and consistent collaborative relationships can impact change in culture and the dynamics of how we receive and share information. For example, recently two competitive medical institutions (roughly 90 miles apart) came together in the spirit of collaboration. Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota served as joint sponsors of an exhibit, Healing the Heart: Serving Humanity and Advancing Science. The exhibit brought together, for the first time, two of the original heart-lung bypass circuits that helped launch the specialty of cardiac surgery nearly 60 years ago. The exhibit highlighted key innovations and contributions to the profession from both institutions along with information on the continued growth of cardiac surgery. This unanticipated collaborative effort created so much synergy during the May 2013 American Association for Thoracic Surgery National Conference that it was requested, successfully executed, and put on display at the 2014 Society of Thoracic Surgeons National Conference.

Imagine the communication and collaboration needed to successfully ship two of the most important artifacts that changed the evolution of cardiac surgery. Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota meticulously transported the first heart-lung machines to Orlando, FL for display and presented them side-by-side. Collaboration of this nature does not take place without strategic organizational planning, a willingness to think differently and compromise.

So where am I headed? On December 6, 2013 the NBSTSA, AST, ARC/STSA and ASA met in Denver, CO to collaborate in what I consider the most successful Joint Summit Meeting of the organizations to date. All attendees had a voice



that respectfully and vigorously but skillfully challenged each other. As one can imagine, when it comes to real collaboration those involved must be willing to come in with an, "I'm all in attitude." After all, before people are willing to change their behaviors and beliefs, there must be an action in the end that yields results. Those involved must be engaged, which means that we all have to think differently just as Mayo Clinic and the University of Minnesota did in the previously mentioned illustration. The goal of our meeting was to share ideas openly and better understand the needs and wants of each organization. As many of you know, it is not uncommon to tenaciously hold on to outdated, irrational or even eccentric opinions. However, the group was able to move past this and share their thoughts in combination with actual experience to great advantage. Endeavors of this nature require a whole different sort of motivation that can only come from within. I am happy to say, each organization's representatives were internally motivated by investing themselves actively for one full day. The meeting demonstrated 'interdependence', a vital behavior that required the four organizations to work in concert. It was evident to me that we are much closer to realizing that no one organization can succeed on its own. And, when the goals are similar we must develop the ability to work as a team. This is a large chunk to bite off, but it was great to begin the nibbling process.

Ron Alston, CST, FAST, BA, MA
President, NBSTSA Board of Directors

CEO CORNER

SO YOU WANT TO BE A CST?

So you want to be a CST? Seems like everyone does as our credentialed community continues to grow and grow. The CST is widely recognized in the surgical community as the consummate credential in surgical technology. More and more states (through the incredible efforts of each state assembly) are requiring the CST in statutory language for practice. The CST is recognized by a growing community of professional nursing associations. Everyone is a CST, right?

Wrong.

Not everyone is a CST. Not everyone has earned the credential. Not everyone should be recognized as holding the credential. Not everyone should have "CST" displayed on their name badge. As recognition and acceptance of the CST grows, so do the number of individuals who want that recognition and acceptance. Individuals who have not done what you have done, earned the right to call yourself a CST. Worse yet, there are instances where employers don't differentiate credentials. A credential is a credential. There are significant differences in professional credentials, and it is our responsibility to educate our fellow surgical colleagues, hospitals, and communities about what it means to be a CST. There is no "equivalency" when it comes to your credential. Take a look at some basic facts:

"...IT IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY TO EDUCATE OUR FELLOW SURGICAL COLLEAGUES, HOSPITALS, AND COMMUNITIES ABOUT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CST."

- *The National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) is an independently incorporated 501(c)6 not for profit organization whose sole purpose is the development and administration of the CST and CSFA examinations. All profits go to the ongoing development and administration of the CST and CSFA examinations. The NBSTSA is the only not for profit organization in surgical technology certification with this mission.*
- *The CST credential is fully accredited by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). The NCCA is a national accreditation agency which has established standards related to examination development and administration. The CST is the only NCCA accredited examination for surgical technologists in the nation. Organizations like the NBSTSA must undergo rigorous third party external review by the NCCA to maintain accreditation. Similar to the NBSTSA, the Competency and Credentialing Institute (CCI), who sponsor the CNOR and CRNFA credentials, is fully accredited by the NCCA.*

- *The NBSTSA has been developing and administrating the CST examination since 1970, a 44 year history of examination development. There are currently 48,000 active CST's in practice around the country.*
- *The CST examination is the only credential named and required for practice in statutory regulation in multiple states around the country.*
- *The CST examination enjoys the sponsorship of the American College of Surgeons, and is exclusively named in the College position statement related to credentialing of allied health personnel in the operating room. Additionally, the College has direct representation on the NBSTSA Board of Directors, with input into the operational and credentialing functions of the NBSTSA.*
- *Similarly the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST), the only professional organization for surgical technologists in the nation, sponsors and has Board of Director representation on the NBSTSA.*
- *The CST is the only recognized examination for outcomes assessment purposes for accredited education programs in surgical technology. The NBSTSA and the CST credential are fully recognized by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs (CAAHEP) and the Accreditation Bureau of Health Education Schools (ABHES).*
- *There is only one CST credential, with no equivalency or comparability with other surgical technology credentials currently being marketed.*

Educate your operating room. Advocate for your credential. Don't allow it to be misrepresented. It's up to all of us who hold the CST credential. Want to talk more? Call me. The NBSTSA stands ready to support you in the process. Let's do it for our credential, for our profession, but most importantly, our patients.

Ron Kruzal, CST, MA, CAE
Chief Executive Officer, NBSTSA



PARTNERSHIP CORNER

A WORD FROM AST'S PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

"I want to be paid more for being certified!"

"Why do other people in the hospital get more respect than I do?"

"My hospital didn't do anything for National Surgical Technologist Week."

"I don't know where to go to find that answer."

You are not alone if you have made these statements or heard someone else make them. There are plenty of questions or concerns that may arise during your daily interactions in the surgical environment. The answers can be found with the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST).

AST has been on the scene since 1969 when 383 members met in New York City to create an organization that would represent what were then-called Operating Room Technicians. Today, AST is a membership organization comprised of surgical technologists that is nearing a milestone of 40,000 members. In today's workplace, it is important that Certified Surgical Technologists have a voice at the table. AST directly represents its 36,000-plus members, and as a result our voice has an impact on the interests of the entire 80,000 surgical technologists across the nation. It is the mission of AST to enhance the profession to ensure quality patient care through continuing education, development of professional standards, profession-related services, authoring practice-related textbooks and legislative engagement.

AST also has a seat at the national table. We are recognized as experts in the perioperative arena by the American College of Surgeons, the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses, the Council on Surgical and Perioperative Safety, the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting, the Accreditation Review Council on Education in Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting and the Association of Surgical Assistants, just to name a few. Most importantly, AST's strategic partnership with the NBSTSA, ARC/STSA and ASA is paramount in the advancement of the professions of surgical technology and surgical first assisting. We have spearheaded legislation that is beginning to sweep across the country that will require accredited education, national certification and continuing education to work in the operating room. No longer is the field of surgical technology just a job; it is our profession.

I am reaching out to surgical technologists across the nation to gain your support to help strengthen our profession. We recognize that we must engage our abilities to address issues and concerns; however, if there is no voice to do this, nothing will be accomplished and the same frustrations that exist today will continue. Certified Surgical Technologists

are continually being given more responsibilities in the operating room. In a survey taken by AST, 72% of our membership is directly involved with purchasing. Surgical technologists have the ability to voice their opinions about products and equipment they use in the operating room to help provide the highest quality of patient care. OR directors are recognizing that not only do surgical technologists provide the best care at the Mayo stand, but they also are an invaluable resource in daily business operations. This recognition didn't just happen overnight. AST has been working tirelessly for decades to open doors for all the highly talented Certified Surgical Technologists across the nation so that they could walk through the door and instantly make an impression on daily patient care while establishing a higher degree for patient care in the future.

I encourage each and every Certified Surgical Technologist who is not a member to consider the options of AST membership, including the benefit of a national network that is continually advocating for this profession now and in the future. Sometimes the greatest benefits aren't tangible. I encourage you to visit the AST website, www.ast.org and consider how your participation could further the future of this great profession.

Roy Zacharias, CST, BS, FAST
President, Association of Surgical Technologists

THE NBSTSA CAREER CENTER

Have you visited the NBSTSA Career Center?

Visit jobs.nbstsa.org today to view hundreds of career opportunities in the surgical technology and surgical assisting industries. NBSTSA's Career Center enables you to:

- Search for qualified job openings
- Create a free account
- Post an anonymous resume
- Set up job alerts
- Apply for new positions that interest you

For more information, visit us online or call today!



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▲ CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF CREDENTIALING!

A LOOK BACK BY CARA STAN

The NBSTSA is delighted to celebrate 40 years of credentialing in 2014! Formerly a sub-committee of the Association of Surgical Technologists (AST), the Liaison Council on Certification (LCC) was separately formed in 1974. Take a look back with us and learn about how far the NBSTSA, certification and patient safety has come.

1970

The first certifying examination was given under the auspices of the AORT Advisory and Examination Committee.



1974

The Liaison Council on Certification (LCC) is established as the certifying agency for operating room technicians.

1984

The LCC receives full membership in the Institute for Credentialing Excellence (ICE), and accreditation of the CST examination by the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA).

1991

The LCC-ST begins development on a certifying examination for surgical first assistants.

1992

The LCC-ST is incorporated in the State of Colorado and the first administration of the National Certifying Examination for Surgical First Assistants (CFA).

1995

The CST certification celebrates its 25th anniversary.

2005

The LCC-ST moves the headquarter office from Colorado Springs to its current address in Littleton, CO.

2006

The LCC-ST changes its name to the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA). The Sandra Edwards, CST – NBSTSA Scholarship fund distributes its first awards to students enrolled in accredited surgical technology and surgical first assisting schools.

2008

New examination forms and practice examinations for the CST and CSFA are launched.

2010

The CST certification celebrates its 40th anniversary.

2011

The NBSTSA launches the State Assembly Program to increase awareness in the surgical community about certification. The first merit certificates are distributed to surgical technology and surgical first assisting programs achieving a 90% pass rate or higher.

2012

The CSFA certification celebrates its 20th anniversary and the NBSTSA launches its online store. The first Milestone recognitions are distributed to CSTs and CSFAs for their commitment to their credentials.



2013

The NBSTSA launches its Career Center and Scrub Buzz.

2014

The NBSTSA takes the first steps in going paperless – moving toward online applications.

The NBSTSA volunteers and staff are excited about the growth and potential that is in store for the industry, credentials and our organization. We look forward to offering more benefits and services to potential candidates and currently certified individuals; including examination preparation materials, streamlined application and renewal processes, advocacy in the surgical profession and much more!

NBSTSA SNEAK PEEK

2014 AST ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE



As always, the National Board of Surgical Technology and Surgical Assisting (NBSTSA) will be in attendance at the annual AST conference, which takes place in Denver, Colorado May 26th – 30th, 2014. We are even more thrilled than usual as our staff has the opportunity to show off our home state and support AST in a big way as a Gold Level Sponsor.

The week starts out in full speed for us since the NBSTSA, AST and ARC/STSA will be offering tours of the headquarter offices on Tuesday, May 27. Attendees will have the opportunity to meet our staff and get a firsthand look at our day to day operations while enjoying some treats.

The NBSTSA is committed to educators in the surgical technology and surgical first assistant community. On Tuesday morning, May 27 the NBSTSA will be sponsoring the Instructors Workshop Breakfast. Kari Allen, WBT Coordinator, will be in attendance as well, to answer any on-campus testing questions you may have.

If you are attending the State Assembly Leadership Forum on Tuesday, look out for the NBSTSA's fearless leader and CEO, Ron Kruzel, CST, MA, CAE. Ron will be presenting information about the NBSTSA and the CST and CSFA credentials from 11:00 a.m. to noon.

The NBSTSA loves our surgical first assistant community and again this year will sponsor a break during the Association of Surgical Assistants business session on Wednesday morning. Come on by and support your fellow surgical first assistants during their two business sessions.

Photo credit: flickr.com/photos/dagpeak/

The NBSTSA continues to be proud to participate with AST's Student Day, which takes place on Thursday, May 29th. If you are a student attending student day, look for NBSTSA Board Members Crit Fisher, CST, FAST, BS and Dana Bancor, CST, FAST as well as staff who will be leading you through our interactive afternoon session.

We encourage you to stop by our exhibit booth #806 where we will be answering all of your certification questions, giving away treats, prizes and have a photo booth set up for you to capture all your fun conference memories. We will also have NBSTSA, CST and CSFA products available for purchase. All of these items will be on sale and more information will become available as we move closer to conference.

AST's annual conference is the must-attend event for surgical technology and surgical first assisting professionals. You will have many opportunities for networking, continuing education and to make a difference within your profession. Support your profession by attending the 2014 AST annual conference in Denver, CO. We look forward to meeting you there!

Cara Stan
Meetings, Marketing & Publications Manager, NBSTSA



5

NBSTSA NUGGETS

NEWS AND INFORMATION

▶ THANK YOU!

The NBSTSA would like to thank the following state assemblies for inviting us to speak at their Spring meetings:

- Arkansas
- Alabama
- Florida
- Georgia
- Iowa
- New Jersey
- North Carolina
- Tennessee
- Texas
- Virginia

For more information on our state assembly speaker program, please contact Cara Stan, Meetings, Marketing & Publications Manager, at 800-707-0057 or via email at cara@nbstsa.org.

▶ WEBINAR ANNOUNCEMENT

In January 2014 the NBSTSA released its first webinar for program directors providing a step-by-step guide to the on-campus testing process. To view this webinar visit the NBSTSA website at nbstsa.org. Stay tuned for more webinars, including examination preparation strategies and a guide to your certification renewal.

▶ 2014 MILESTONES



The 2014 Milestone program is under way! As in years past, the NBSTSA will be recognizing CSTs reaching 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 years of certification. And CSFAs achieving 15 and 20 years of certification. Check the mail in the coming months for your milestone pin and certificate.

▶ GOING GREEN

The NBSTSA is continuing their green initiative. In 2013, the organization made a move to handbooks on CD and in 2014 we implemented a recycling program with our partner organizations (AST and ARC-STSA) and we hope to move toward online applications by the end of the year.



▶ DO YOU HAVE NEWS THAT OTHERS WILL FIND INTERESTING? DO YOU KNOW OF AN UPCOMING EVENT? DO YOU WANT TO SHARE A STORY, AN OPINION OR LET US KNOW IF YOUR ST PROGRAM IS DOING SOMETHING SPECIAL? TELL US, [EMAIL CARA@NBSTSA.ORG](mailto:CARA@NBSTSA.ORG)

LOOKING TO HIRE A CST OR CSFA?

VISIT JOBS.NBSTSA.ORG TODAY!

- Post your job in view of highly qualified/certified surgical technologists and surgical first assistants
- Search our resume database for qualified candidates
- Manage jobs and applicant activity right from our website
- Limit applicants to only those who are qualified
- Fill your open positions quickly with great talent

Job seeking is always free and employers should look out for sales and discounts when posting jobs.



THE NATIONAL BOARD
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▲ LIVE FROM THE NBSTSA! **A DAY IN THE OFFICE**

A day in the NBSTSA office is always busy! Our staff answers hundreds of phone calls a day, processes even more renewal and examination applications and communicates with educators regarding the on-campus testing process. Between all of this we are busy implementing procedures to streamline the application process for constituents, brainstorming improved examination preparation materials and furthering the surgical technology and surgical assisting professions. Here is an inside look at what the NBSTSA has been up to in the past six months outside of processing.

Our office went live with ImageNow, Phase I on December 2, 2013 and staff survived! ImageNow is a data management system that will cut down on paper in the office and streamline application processing. Our staff is very excited to implement Phase II which is currently in the works and involves initiating simple online applications and forms, electronic signature capabilities and online payment options for applicants. We will be sure to keep everyone updated on our progress!

At the end of January, staff assembled WBT information packages in record time and mailed them to 510 program directors. If you are a program director and have not received your 2014 Candidate Handbooks or would like to request more, contact our office at 800-707-0057 or send an email to mail@nbstsa.org. The WBT department is in full swing and has received more applications from programs earlier in the year than ever before. A big thank you to our educators, for sending in your WBT applications in a timely manner!

The renewal department is hard at work developing new methods to get your attention before your renewal expires. We will be sending email reminders to those of you who have earned the correct amount of credits within your cycle date but have not renewed your certification. We will also be sending drop notices informing certificants that they are still able to renew by the late renewal policy or by examination, depending on your continuing education credit history. If you have changed your email address be sure to update it with the NBSTSA, so you receive these emails.

As mentioned in the January issue of the NBSTSA's e-newsletter, Scrub Buzz, the NBSTSA staff has adjusted well to the "think green" mentality. It is estimated that our office receives approximately 500 pieces of mail weekly, which is now being recycled instead of going to landfills. In addition, a considerable amount of cardboard boxes and food packaging is also being recycled. The AST and ARC/STSA are also participating in this program.

The NBSTSA continues to have an impact on our local community. In early March, the NBSTSA staff pitched-in to help the Denver Peanut Butter Plan. Each month this charitable organization assembles a group of people to make and distribute peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for Denver's homeless population. Volunteers bring a few jars of

peanut butter and jelly, loaves of bread and whatever other charitable items they may have (ex. t-shirts, bottled water, toothbrushes/toothpaste, etc.). We even had participation and donations from ARC-STSA and AST staff! Over two thousand sandwiches were made and distributed that day!

Our marketing and credentialing departments are working diligently to develop additional study products and resources for examination candidates. Look for new options including free webinars and products available for purchase later this year. Our marketing representatives are also busy spreading the word about the importance of certification at ten industry tradeshow each year as well as many state assembly meetings.

Our staff would love to hear from you! If there is something we are doing right, let us know. If there is something we could improve on, we want to hear about that too! We are available by phone 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. MST at 800-707-0057 and 24 hours a day on our Facebook page, facebook.com/TheNBSTSA.

▲ LIKE US ON FACEBOOK! **JOIN OUR GROWING ONLINE COMMUNITY**

Our goal is to provide timely and relevant information, news and support to our Certified Surgical Technologists and Certified Surgical First Assistants across the nation.

- Like us at Facebook.com/TheNBSTSA
- Follow us at Twitter.com/NBSTSA





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UPCOMING MEETINGS

SEE YOU THERE!

NPSF CONFERENCE

Orlando, FL

• **MAY 14–16, 2014**

ASCA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Nashville, TN

• **MAY 14–17, 2014**

AST ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Denver, CO

• **MAY 26–30, 2014**

FLORIDA STATE ASSEMBLY MEETING

Tampa, FL

• **AUGUST 2, 2014**

MANAGING TODAY'S OR ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Long Beach, CA

• **SEPTEMBER 17–19, 2014**

NORTH CAROLINA STATE ASSEMBLY MEETING

Concord, NC

• **SEPTEMBER 27, 2014**

AMERICAN NURSES CREDENTIALING CENTER MAGNET CONFERENCE

Dallas, TX

• **OCTOBER 8–10, 2014**

AMERICAN COLLEGE OF SURGEONS CLINICAL CONGRESS

San Francisco, CA

• **OCTOBER 26–30, 2014**

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR HEALTHCARE RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EXPOSITION

Anaheim, CA

• **OCTOBER 26–29, 2014**

ANNUAL NATIONAL FORUM ON QUALITY IMPROVEMENT HEALTH CARE

Orlando, FL

• **DECEMBER 7–10, 2014**