

CELEBRATING 40 YEARS OF NSTW!

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YES!



A letter from AST's
President Joe
Charleman,
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FAST

Greetings to the AST membership and Happy National Surgical Technologists Week!

This will be the 40th anniversary of National Surgical Technologists Week. As we look back on our profession and its historical growth, we need to acknowledge the positive efforts of the Association of Surgical Technologists. The Association of Surgical Technologists was established in 1969 by members of the American College of Surgeons (ACS), the American Hospital Association (AHA), and the Association of perioperative Registered Nurses (AORN).

Today, surgical technologists are working in one of the fastest growing professions in the country. The US Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the surgical technology profession will grow faster than the average of all other occupations through the year 2030, and it is anticipated that the volume of surgery will increase exponentially due to the expanding senior population and retirement of the baby boomer population.

As the oldest and most widely recognized professional organization for surgical technologists, AST's primary purpose is to ensure that surgical technologists have the knowledge and skills to administer patient care of the highest quality. In this area is where we need to focus our efforts of advocacy, the AST curriculum and education of surgical technologists through an accredited program differentiates the Certified Surgical Technologist from an OJT trained individual. The highest quality of care delivered from behind the Mayo stand is the Certified Surgical Technologist.

We must remember that AST, the only national organization that represents more than 80,000 surgical technologists, is governed by an 11-member Board of Directors. On the local level, 50 formed state assemblies address member concerns and issues. I realize there are areas AST can improve and become more transparent with membership. The AST Board and I are listening to membership, implementing new initiatives, and working towards improving our communication. I wanted to touch on some of the positive initiatives that AST has delivered to its membership:

- AST national membership has been \$70 since January 1993 (separate chapter dues at that time ranged from \$5 to \$15). In 1999, \$10 was added for all the state assemblies for the present combined national and state dues of \$80.
- CE articles in journal: Beginning in January 1986 individual CE articles have been \$6 each and are still that amount today. In packages the CE is less than \$2 per credit. For example, package 9 is \$29 for 17 credits—\$1.70 per credit.
- Regarding the annual conference, from 1998 to 2002 the lowest registration rate was \$285, then for about 10 years from 2005 to 2015 the rate was \$350. But starting in 2016 we reduced the lowest rate to \$275.
- Advocacy information, AST has passed legislation for CSTs in 17 states, most recently Connecticut, and for CSFAs in 9 states. Including all those bills there have been various amendments AST has passed 35 pieces of legislation.
- National Surgical Technologist Week which began in 1984. This will be the 40th anniversary. AST has created posters, highlighted individuals making a difference, shared proclamations, and provided links on how to celebrate.

These are some of the highlights of what AST has done for the profession. As you review these bullets, I ask membership to compare the CE costs, conference fees, and membership dues from other healthcare organizations. I am positive that you will find that the AST's pricing is among the most economical.

As the AST board and I continue to focus on advancing the profession and the organization, I ask membership to speak with their nurse educators, surgeons and your healthcare organizations about how your training, education, and the CST credential delivers the highest quality of care from behind the Mayo stand.