Introduction

AMSN is the professional nursing organization dedicated to the specialty of medical-surgical nursing. There are approximately 600,000 medical-surgical nurses in the US, the largest number of specialty nurses practicing in both the hospital and nonhospital settings (HRSA, 2010). As the only professional organization dedicated to the specialty of medical-surgical nursing, the Academy of Medical-Surgical Nurses (AMSN) is a vibrant community of more than 11,000 medical-surgical nurses who care about improving patient care, developing personally and professionally, advocating for the specialty of medical-surgical nursing, and connecting with others who share their compassion and commitment.


Core Values: Medical-surgical nursing is a distinct specialty with its own body of knowledge.

We believe patients receive better care when medical-surgical nurses:

- Engage in ongoing professional development
- Use evidence-based practices
- Speak with a unified voice
- Serve as leaders on healthcare teams
- Have the necessary resources to deliver excellent care
- Practice in a healthy practice environment

The priority agenda flows from the mission and core values and is a concise way of identifying what AMSN stands for. The priority agenda states the AMSN position on each issue, why it holds that position, and the actions AMSN will take based on the agenda. This document addresses those cutting edge issues that are at the heart of what AMSN stands for, what our members believe, and what is in the interest of excellent patient care. The priority agenda is the framework for accountability and provides focus for the allocation of resources (e.g., staff, volunteers, Volunteer Units, fiscal needs, programs and initiatives). From the priority agenda, the board can determine the strategic plan, strategic alliances that will further the agenda, and make other strategic decisions.

The AMSN Priority Agenda is used by the board, volunteer leaders, and staff who represent AMSN. It may also be used by members to articulate what AMSN is focusing on for the specialty of medical-surgical nursing.

Who are Medical-Surgical Nurses?

A majority of medical-surgical nurses practice in the inpatient setting. They specialize in caring for patients with acute illness, major surgery and chronic diseases or conditions. Medical-surgical nurses also specialize in caring for patients in settings such as home health agencies, community health clinics, private practices, hospices and schools of nursing. It is anticipated that the practice setting of medical-
surgical nurses will change as the health care environment evolves. Different skills and competencies for the medical-surgical nurse may be required.

Medical-surgical nurses manage care needs of patients admitted from the surgical recovery area and emergency department, or transferred directly from the health care provider’s office, the intensive care unit or from a long-term care facility. They simultaneously coordinate care for several patients on a designated medical-surgical unit who may be in stable condition or at high risk for a rapid deterioration in health status, and those who are not ready to return home or transfer to a long-term care setting. Medical-surgical nurses teach patients and/or families how to best care for themselves and when to seek medical and nursing care upon discharge. Medical-surgical nurses are integral health care team members who promote wellness in addition to managing illness.

To learn more, visit www.amsn.org

Professional Development & Organizational Health

Background

Professional development is AMSN’s core business. We believe that medical-surgical nurses can better lead health care teams, coordinate care and manage care transitions, grow professionally, and advance the art and science of medical-surgical nursing when they engage in activities that promote their professional growth. AMSN fosters life-long learning and supports the leadership abilities of the clinical nurse at the point of care. The ultimate purpose of professional development is to enable nurses to provide compassionate, patient-centered care and achieve quality outcomes.

Leadership development and succession planning of the BOD, Volunteer Unit (VU) chairpersons and members is essential to promote the organizational health of AMSN. We believe it is vital to identify and foster the next generation of leaders through, training, coaching, mentoring, and providing opportunities for volunteer members to develop leadership skills.

AMSN is committed to providing state-of-the-art, accessible, and relevant continuing education, leadership opportunities, coaching/mentoring, and certification resources. Examples of initiatives to address this priority are:

Current Initiatives

Annual convention; Online library; Clinical Leadership Development Program (CLDP); Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification (CMSRN) program through the Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board; Medical-Surgical Nursing certification review courses; Study resources to prepare for the Medical-Surgical certification examination; Volunteer opportunities; Enhance leadership development by establishing competencies for members of the AMSN BOD and using these as a basis for education and growth; Web-based Volunteer Leader toolkit; Evaluation study on CLDP outcomes; Care Coordination and Transition Management Certification (CCCTM) through the Medical-Surgical Nursing Certification Board; Study resources to prepare for the Care Coordination certification examination.

Planned Initiatives:

Evaluation of the Ohio State EBP Immersion program for future member initiatives; Provide tools to develop leadership skills of volunteer chairpersons by establishing competencies and using these as a basis for education and growth; Provide advisors for newly appointed leaders.


**Practice Environment**

*Background*

The practice environment for the medical-surgical nurse occurs primarily on hospital units and involves care for adult patients who are acutely ill with a wide variety of medical problems and diseases or are recovering from surgery. AMSN believes that quality patient care, staffing based on patient care needs, the ability to practice to the full scope of education, and cooperative relationships among the members of the health care team serve to promote safe practices and enhance the development of the medical-surgical nurse.

A healthy practice environment emphasizes quality care, safety for patients and nurses, collaboration between members of the healthcare team, and continuity of care including care transitions. Technological advances and information systems are used in clinical care areas to promote each of these aspects of the healthy practice environment. In this environment, certification, advanced preparation, and lifelong learning are an integral part of the hospital philosophy.

AMSN is committed to providing medical-surgical nurses with tools needed to achieve optimal practice environments and ensure the best delivery of care for patients. An evidence-based practice environment is directed toward quality and improved patient care. Examples of initiatives to address this priority are:

**Current Initiatives**

Publications including *Core Curriculum for Medical-Surgical Nursing – 6th edition*, *MedSurg Matters!* a member newsletter, and *MEDSURG Nursing* journal; the AMSN PRISM Award™ to recognize exemplary medical-surgical nursing units; Clinical practice and special interest online networking (the HUB); Evidence-based practice and research grants; Position statements on clinical practice issues affecting the practice environment; Addition of Pro-Nursing language chart to the AMSN website; Provision of a healthy practice environment advocacy guide with practice resources.

**Planned Initiatives:**

- Develop talking points for the clinical nurse to discuss acuity based staffing;
- Provide multi-faceted education offerings regarding acuity based staffing;
- Publish an AMSN Position Statement on Staffing Standards;
- Publish the 6th edition of *Scope and Standards for Medical-Surgical Nursing Practice*;
- Collaborate with the American Academy of Ambulatory Care Nursing (AAACN) to determine which evidence-based Care Coordination Handoff Tool(s) may be the best for use in the medical-surgical environment;
- Conduct a retrospective analysis of key characteristics of PRISM award units;
- Develop Standards of a Healthy Practice Environment for Medical-Surgical Units;
- Participate in the Moral Resilience Professional Issues Panel;
- Collaborate with the American Psychiatric Nurses Association (APNA) to develop protocols and standards for medical-surgical nurses caring for patients who have attempted/contemplated suicide.
National Leadership

Background
The political, economic, and social drivers of change include the focus on healthcare reform as well as public demand for access to quality care and practice. In 2010 the Institute of Medicine published The Future of Nursing which calls for nurses to partner with other healthcare professional in the redesign of U.S. healthcare (IOM, 2010). To achieve this goal, a shift in how nurses view their responsibility to patients and relationships with other work team members is required.

AMSN establishes and maintains relationships with mission-similar organizations for the purpose of enhancing quality care and a healthy practice environment. AMSN continues to develop partnerships and coalitions at the national level to gain influence for the specialty of medical-surgical nursing. AMSN is dedicated to engaging in discussions with multiple stakeholders to monitor health policy issues and aligning with other organizations to influence decision makers at the national level. In order to prepare the medical-surgical nurse to lead the change and advance the care of the adult population, AMSN has adopted the following initiatives:

Current initiatives
Legislative team, comprised of volunteer members, monitors political trends and provides members with up to date information regarding legislation pertaining to healthcare and the nursing profession; Position statement in support of the Cancer Moonshot initiative; Published the Medical-Surgical Nursing Definition and its distinguishing characteristics; Collaborations with the AAACN, American Nurses Association (ANA), APNA, Nursing Alliance for Quality Care (NAQC), Nursing Community, Nursing Organizations Alliance (The Alliance); Abbott Nutrition, HealthStream, Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins (LWW); Joining Forces; and Nurse.com; Participated in the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Roundtable discussion; Collaborated with the Veterans Access to Quality Healthcare Alliance in support of legislation permitting advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) working in the VHA to practice to the full extent of their training, education and certification – also published a statement of support on social media; Endorsement of the Gerontology Advanced Practice Nurses’ Association (GAPNA) position statement on Proficiencies for the APRN Gerontological Specialist.

Planned Initiatives:
Assign a subcommittee to monitor current legislation and develop Letters to Congress; Provide a link on the AMSN website to allow members to access templates of letters they can modify and send to their specific Representatives & Senators; Participate in the Palliative & Hospice Nursing Care Summit; Collaborate with the Centers for Disease Control and the ANA on an Infection Control Initiative (Healthy Nation); Collaborate with the National Association of Clinical Nurse Specialists (NACNS) and the Advancing Safety in Healthcare Technology (AAMI) Foundation to define the training needs of nurses regarding complex and/or new healthcare technologies; Promote the visibility of AMSN in the media by using BOD members and volunteers to comment on issues of importance to medical-surgical nurses.
References


