



# MINORN

## MINNESOTA ORGANIZATION OF REGISTERED NURSES

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February 18, 2014

1st Vice President: Mary  
Tanner  
Duluth, MN

Representative Tina Liebling,  
House, Health and Human Services Policy Committee Chair  
Minnesota House of Representatives

2nd Vice President: Molly  
Maxwell  
Minnetonka, MN

### **Re: H.F. 1993: Response to Surgical Technologist Questionnaire**

Secretary: Patti  
Kummeth  
Rochester, MN

Dear Representative Liebling and Committee Members:

Treasurer: Mary Ellen  
Imdieke  
Blaine, MN

The Minnesota Organization of Registered Nurses (MNORN) is opposed to the language in Section 1. subdivision 4. Surgical technology. "Surgical technology" means surgical patient care under the supervision of a physician or a nurse."

Director: Mary Bliesmer  
North Mankato, MN

MNORN believes that it is imperative that the surgical technologist is under the supervision of the circulating nurse.

Director: Linda Mash  
Hopkins, MN

Director: Jeanne Terhaar  
Hopkins, MN

It is important to understand the role of the circulating nurse. This person is the only surgical room professional whose focus is to ensure the wholistic safety of the patient. The surgeon's focus is on the surgical site and procedure. The surgical technologist is essentially another "pair of hands" for the surgeon. The anesthesiologist is focused on anesthesia administration and vital signs. Only the circulating nurse focuses on the entire patient, coordinating, supervising and ensuring the overall safety of the patient. Surgeons are not generally present for the entire surgery; they often have more than one surgeries going on at the same time, in what is commonly called "swing rooms." The circulating nurse is the constant professional presence throughout the entire surgery.

Director: Joseph  
Twitchell  
Rochester, MN

Executive Director:  
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CMS understanding of the critical importance of the circulating nurse has resulted in its inclusion in the Medicare Conditions of Participation for Hospitals. 42 C.F.R. 482.51(a) (2) states, "Licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and surgical technologists (operating room technicians) may serve as "scrub nurses" under the supervision of a registered nurse." The accompanying

*MNORN is a constituent member of the American Nurses Association. Our mission is to advance the profession of nursing in Minnesota through advocacy, leadership development, education and mentorship.*

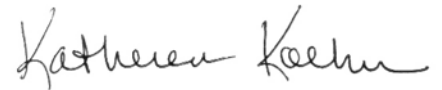
CMS Interpretive Guidelines concerning Surgical Services in Medicare-participating hospitals provide that the circulating nurse must be an RN.

Unlike many other states, the role of the circulating nurse is not currently defined in Minnesota state statute, which makes its inclusion within the surgical technologist definition even more critical. This is not a “ratio issue” as stated in the Surgical Technologist Questionnaire Response. This is an issue of ensuring an environment of patient safety throughout the surgical experience by having a clearly defined supervisory relationship between the surgical technologist and the circulating nurse.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Tucker MA, RN  
President



Katheren Koehn MA, RN  
Executive Director