

What's in Certification for Hospitals?

ASATT National Certification is for technicians, isn't it? There's no such thing as an ASATT-certified hospital, but hospitals employ ASATT-certified technicians.

Even though the certification ultimately is owned by the technician, many times hospitals pay the cost of certification or reimburse technicians who earn it. Sometimes, the hospital provides in-house training, and some even pay for training that leads to technician certification. When technicians attend training, some hospitals let them attend on company time.

Some hospitals who think in matters of dollars and cents might see the certification process as an expense. Many ask, "What do I get out of it" They tally the following:

- Cost of the ASATT Certification test.
- Cost of training.
- Time off to attend training.
- Time lost (technician is not "on duty") because of training/testing.

But certified technicians are not an expense. They are an investment. Read on.

Considering training as an expense is penny-wise, pound-foolish. "What if I train them and they leave, or what if I don't and they stay," is a realistic concern for hospitals. A hospital is known by the company he keeps;" reword this to, "A hospital is known by quality of technicians he has."

The technician is the face of both the hospital and the profession, and the profession should be scared stiff of putting inadequately trained technicians on front of patients. Why? Every time there is a problem, callback, error, or misunderstanding, that

situation directly impacts both the hospital and the profession. Unhappy anesthesia providers might seek to hire their own technicians. Incompetence may be bliss, but it can also be economically devastating, eroding the trust of the anesthesia providers. A well-trained technician is essential to patient safety, the most important issue for anesthesia providers and the hospital's operating rooms in running smoothly with on time starts and turn over's, which is a big part of the hospitals business during these times. With some hospitals scrambling to even find technicians to work as PRN status, many are happy just to have bodies, but this is a short-sighted, short-term solution. Just because you get coal or a diamond in the rough doesn't mean you can't put it under pressure to change or polish it so it glistens.

Is there a difference between technicians with all the same attributes except that one is ASATT-certified and one is not? Any technician can claim to be good, but, an ASATT-certified tech has already proved to have the basic knowledge of his/her worth.

Hospitals need technicians. Do hospitals train them or not? Fact: Technician performance affects directly hospital profitability.

Well-trained and knowledgeable technicians have better performance; therefore, well-trained technicians are an asset to the hospital. The logic is simple, but yet, many hospitals don't require certification. As I see it, the ever-changing technology in anesthesia will have a major impact in the operating room environment.

The arriving of new technology requires the anesthesia technicians to be knowledgeable and skillful to set up and troubleshoot the new high-tech devices.

The anesthesia technician needs to become more familiar with and have a better understanding how the technology is being adapted to everyday routine procedures. This will require a technician to have a good foundation of knowledge and be able to adapt to the environment quickly and safely assist the anesthesia provider.

Hospitals are faced with the need of experienced technicians; certified are the best choice, so it will not require hospitals bring someone into the field that has no idea of what is that an anesthesia technician does and spend time and resources to train them. Our hospital has so much new technology that we are always being trained on new equipment. This is the part when certification becomes an important issue, in my view, because a certified technician has proven to have the basic knowledge, the learning curve of the new technology shortens and the hospitals gain the most for being able to put the technology for use with not much of a problem.

What I am trying to imply with this, is to emphasize how important certification is not just for the technicians that obtain it but for hospitals and anesthesia providers to be able to provide the safest anesthesia to its patients.