

ASSOCIATION OF SURGICAL FIRST ASSISTANTS HOLDS FIRST MEETING IN NASHVILLE

The Association of Surgical First Assistants, a new membership organization sponsored by the Association of Surgical Technologists, held its first official meeting September 21 as a part of AST's annual Surgical First Assistant Forum in Nashville, Tennessee.

The meeting, intended not as an official business meeting but as an open discussion, was attended by the majority of forum participants. Bill Teutsch, AST Chief Executive Officer, moderated the discussion. Originally scheduled for 90 minutes, the meeting lasted three hours, and served as an excellent follow-up to the organizational introduction at last year's SFA forum in Charleston, South Carolina. The Nashville ASFA meeting was intended to provide those involved with the formation of the new organization with input on the direction that new and potential members would like to see the organization move.

The Association of Surgical First Assistants (ASFA), running currently from the Association of Surgical Technologists headquarters in Englewood, Colorado, began marketing efforts earlier this year. The Surgical



Dorothy Corrigan, CST, and Donna Henderson, CST/CFA, assist in the registration area during the SFA Forum.

First Assistant Specialty Section has been in place for several years now, and has repeatedly asked the Board of Directors at AST for more autonomy. The AST Board of Directors has discussed the formation of a new organization for the last several years, and the final go-ahead was given at this year's AST Annual Conference in Atlanta, Georgia.

The reasons for the formation of a sub-organization to function under

the umbrella of the Association of Surgical Technologists were many, but primarily the intent was to provide an organization for first assistants within AST. While surgical first assistants are a small group based on membership percentages within the Association of Surgical Technologists, they are one of AST's most active groups, with both business and legislative interests at stake. The Board of Directors of AST began to work on the development of ASFA as a way to serve the membership as a whole and at the same time to begin to address the increasing needs of the surgical first assistants. The organization was originally conceptualized by the AST Board of Directors as a trade organization with its primary focus to revolve around the support of surgical first assistant businesses and the individuals employed by those businesses. Working with the AST Board of Directors, staff at AST began to plan an organization that would consist of institutional and individual memberships.

After receiving input from AST members at several forums and focus groups during the last year, it has

been decided to re-tool ASFA as an individual membership organization, but to seek corporate sponsorships. These corporate sponsorships will be sought primarily from businesses that provide surgical first assisting services, but will also be welcomed from hospitals, HMOs and other interested corporate entities.

To this end, ASFA will proceed on several fronts over the next several months:

- The development of a committee to help build membership and corporate sponsorship.
- The development of a “charter” or “founding” member concept, both individual and corporate. This type of membership would be offered to the initial sponsoring and individual members of ASFA.
- The development of current networking, so ASFA could become an organization to bridge the gaps between first assistants from AST, the National Surgical Assistants Association, and the American Board of Surgical Assistants.
- Further discussions and focus groups—what opportunities could ASFA provide for members from all three of the above backgrounds?

In addition, an ASFA meeting will be held in conjunction with next year’s AST Annual Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada. While this meeting is still in the initial planning stages, it is intended to be held the day before conference, with panel discussions comprised of members and experts from different backgrounds, business development discussion, and a

legislative update. Additionally, Michael Dunn, CEO of Michael Dunn Associates, an influential lobbying firm from Washington, DC, will present a grass-roots legislative advocacy workshop on Friday, May 31 at the AST Annual Conference.

The ASFA web site has been operational for the last few months on a bare-bones basis, but is currently being further developed as a clearinghouse for networking information. The web site, located at www.asfanet.org, will include real-time and on-going discussion servers on a members-only basis, basic information about the organization itself, and important news and legislative updates. In addition, the ASFA staff is ready to provide answers to your questions about the Association of Surgical First Assistants by email at asfa@ast.org.

As you probably noticed, what was previously the “SFA Newsletter” has now become the “ASFA Newsletter,” a quarterly publication that will include grass roots and other legislative information and updates, clinical articles, and business development information specifically geared to the interests of surgical first assistants.

Additionally, the Surgical First Assistant Specialty Section has now been rolled into the new organization, and all existing members of the SFA Specialty Section will become members of ASFA. Members with concerns about dues or renewal should call 800-637-7433 and speak with a member services representative.

Finally, if you haven’t already joined SFA in the past, or ASFA recently, please take this chance to do so. We have included membership information with this newsletter, and hope to hear from you soon!

The Association of Surgical First Assistants (ASFA) is a national organization that represents the interests of nonphysician surgical assistants and surgical assisting businesses.

The field of surgical assisting is now undergoing some of the biggest changes in the history of the profession. These changes will have a dramatic effect on your career and your surgical assistant business. With growing public interest in health care, insurance, and the qualifications of the individuals who care for patients, there has been an increased call for regulation of all individuals who provide direct patient care, and the operating room is certainly no exception. In several states, the profession has been threatened by regulatory or legislative activity to limit the practice of nonphysician surgical assistants.

As states and the federal government examine the issues that will define our profession, it is important that you and your business actively participate so the profession succeeds. Surgical assistants now have the opportunity to shape the future, and it’s important to act now, before that future is defined by outside forces and interests.

ASFA promotes the interests and goals of member surgical assistants and businesses in many different venues:

- Works with Congress, state legislatures and numerous regulatory bodies.
- Advocates for insurance company coverage and reimbursement for

OF MEMBERSHIP

the services of qualified nonphysician surgical assistants.

- Advocates for Medicare reimbursement for the services of nonphysician surgical assistants.
- Publishes valuable resources for the first assistant, including the ASFA Newsletter and www.asfanet.org, a dynamic web site that helps keep members and the public informed about current trends that affect surgical assisting in the United States today.
- Assists with grass-roots, formal lobbying and other efforts at the state and federal level.
- Liaisons with other national and local organizations concerned with the provision of quality, cost effective health care.
- Serves as a clearinghouse for networking and information sharing among surgical assistants nationwide.

ASFA membership is the edge you need in the surgical assisting profession

As an ASFA member, you gain substantive advantages in the surgical first assisting profession because you have the opportunity to exert a more dynamic influence on federal, state and local initiatives that directly affect you and your business.

Your membership in ASFA provides:

- A voice and a vote in a new membership organization, representing one of the fastest growing professions in the United States.
- Access to vital information relevant to your practice and the protection of your career.
- Full time legislative and regulatory monitoring in Washington, DC, and nationwide, with updates about the issues that may affect you.
- The opportunity to network with other surgical assistants and surgical assistant businesses to share your insights and to learn from others.
- Access to the members-only sections of www.asfanet.org, including discussion boards and even live chat with other surgical assistants across the nation.

APPLICATION FOR ASFA MEMBERSHIP

CURRENT AST MEMBERS, PLEASE CALL 800-637-7433, X 238, TO JOIN.

Last Name _____ First Name _____ MI _____

Home Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Business/Hospital Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Certification number: _____ LCC-ST NSAA ABSA

Individual Membership

Individual Member Dues: \$180 per year (includes AST membership)

Corporate sponsorship: \$ _____

Payment method: Check/money order Visa MasterCard AmEx

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Mail application and check, money order or credit card information to Association of Surgical First Assistants, 7108-C South Alton Way, Centennial, CO 80112, or call 800-637-7433