

A THOUGHT FROM OUR CHAIR



Pat Smedley

We have chosen our theme for this year's annual conference as 'Priorities for Practice' to reflect a focus of sessions on practical issues which affect our membership. A close evaluation of conference 2002 revealed that delegates wanted more time for discussion of practice-related issues, and more chance to participate in 'hands-on workshops'. The programme enlargement to include 5 tracks includes plenty of opportunity to talk – to share ideas and to try out some practical skills as well as maintaining a basic traditional structure of two track clinical and management presentations. The location is new – Hove – Brighton to underline the point that we are intent on creating changes in this association in order to serve our members interests more fully.

The time is ripe for a new look at practice. Indeed this is taking place already with the drawing up of national standards and competencies to underpin good practice (in many areas of life). Legislation will require practitioners to present proof of tested competency in practical skills to uphold any dispute in the medico-legal arena. We have finally finished the first draft of our BARNA National Standards – this draft will be sent to all members – please read them carefully and return any comments as instructed. We will make changes, present them at conference and vote on them formally at the Annual General Meeting.

In addition to our own national presenters we are delighted to announce that the nurse leaders of ASPAN (American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses) will be coming over to share in our conference and to offer their ideas on nursing in the PACU speciality. ASPAN is a well-developed strong association – a fitting model for BARNA and we welcome them. The ASPAN keynote speech – 'Leadership at the Bedside' is timely – the recent evidence of large numbers of British nurses keen to complete leadership courses bears witness to our desire to seize the initiative in promoting our profession

as equal partners in the delivery of patient care. Again, we are allocating time to the discussion of the role of the non-physician anaesthetic assistant (as defined by the NHS Modernisation Agency: Changing Workforce Programme). We in BARNA have always supported the idea that anaesthetic nurses should be trained up to an advanced level of practice with the expectation that one-day, they would actually take the ultimate step of intubating the patient and administering the anaesthetic – should they so wish. The pace for change and the possible realisation of this has gathered momentum recently. BARNA will work alongside other professional organisations in developing the trials for non-anaesthetic assistant within the UK. We have left room at the end of conference for an open discussion on this topic.

So without any further ado please find the section on conference in this journal – read and inwardly digest. Then fill out that application form, tell your work colleagues about this event, and come and join in the fun in June!

Pat Smedley