



**Rhode Island Becomes 25<sup>th</sup> State to Enact RN Circulator Requirement**  
Bill Requires an RN Circulator Be Present in Every Surgery

(Denver, Colo.) – July 26, 2016 – A new law, which becomes effective on October 1, 2016 in Rhode Island, requires an RN Circulator in every operating room to serve as an advocate to improve surgical outcomes. The Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN), with a membership base of 40,000 RNs and representing the interests of 160,000 perioperative Registered Nurses in the U.S., recommends all states adopt this legislation and commends Rhode Island for its commitment to patient safety.

The perioperative registered nurse (RN), through professional and patient-centered expertise, is the primary patient advocate in the operating room and is responsible for monitoring all aspects of the patient’s condition. The presence of the RN in the circulating role throughout each surgical procedure is essential for timely delivery of quality surgical care and optimal patient outcomes. Under the new law, the Rhode Island Department of Health shall not issue or renew a license to a facility unless the facility has adopted policies and procedures to have to have a minimum of one circulating nurse physically present in each operating room for the duration of each surgical procedure. Rhode Island joins over 30 states that address the importance of RN Circulators, and is the 25<sup>th</sup> state to have what AORN considers a strong law or regulation.

AORN collaborated with association members and the Rhode Island State Nurses Association (RISNA) to educate legislators on the role of the RN Circulator. Representative Joe McNamara, Chairman of the House Health, Education and Welfare Committee, and Senator Cynthia Coyne, member of the Senate Health and Human Services Committee, sponsored and championed H7448 and S2469 into law.

“As perioperative nurses, it is important that we are advocates for patients in the operating room as well as in our statehouses,” said Julie-ann Greenhalgh BSN, RN, CNOR, and Rhode Island member of AORN. “I’m thrilled that Rhode Island made patient safety a priority by passing this legislation. It took the hard work of many, but we all agree it was well worth it.”

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