

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)

Resolution HHS-24-22

IMPROVING SAFETY IN THE OPERATING ROOM

WHEREAS, certified surgical technologists serve as a surgeon's co-pilot in the operating room, providing instruments and supplies to the surgeon and preventing patient death related to medication, surgical fires, instruments, implants, infection, and bleeding;

WHEREAS, certified surgical technologists are the surgical team member that maintains the sterile surgical field to ensure the surgical team adheres to sterile technique to prevent surgical site infections;

WHEREAS, certified surgical technologists must perform very effectively to ensure that certain "Never Events" like medication errors, surgical implant errors, unintended retained surgical items, patient burns, and incorrect site surgeries do not take place;

WHEREAS, the persons who perform must be highly skilled and well trained with ample operating room experience;

WHEREAS, for nearly fifty years, the standard for surgical technologist education has been accredited education, including classroom time plus 225 hours of skills lab before entering the operating room for 540 hours of supervised clinical rotation training;

WHEREAS, in recent years, unaccredited programs have popped up that do not require such intensive training, including some online only programs that require no operating room experience before completion of the program;

WHEREAS, qualified, well trained certified surgical technologists are vital to a safe operating room and good patient safety practice; and

WHEREAS, certain exceptions may be made for currently employed surgical technologists and military-trained surgical technologists, or in cases where workforce shortages call for using lesser trained individuals depending on a number of factors.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the National Black Caucus of State Legislators calls upon states across the country to implement certain minimum standards for certified surgical technologists to ensure safer operating rooms, to protect patients from preventable mistakes in the operating room, and to protect student consumers from predatory educational programs that will not prepare them for long term success in their field; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Vice President of the United States, members of the United States House of Representatives and the United States Senate, and other federal and state government officials as appropriate.

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Sponsored by: Sen. Gloria Butler (GA)

Policy Committee: Health and Human Services (HHS)