

AORN Highlights Power of the Surgical Time Out in Preventing Harm and Saving Lives

DENVER, CO, UNITED STATES, July 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- A momentary pause may be the most powerful tool in protecting surgical patients, according to the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN). In honor of [National Time Out Day](#), AORN recently spotlighted the [life-saving impact of surgical Time Out](#), standardized pauses that ensure surgical teams perform the correct procedure on the correct patient at the correct site.

In the real-life incident highlighted by AORN, a surgical team caught a serious discrepancy just moments before a procedure when a patient's verbal confirmation didn't match the written consent form. Because of the Time Out, the team identified the mismatch (right side versus left) and prevented a potentially harmful mistake. Their response was focused, collaborative, and centered on open communication rather than blame.

This kind of safety-first culture is what AORN aims to promote through National Time Out Day, launched in partnership with The Joint Commission 21 years ago. While Time Out is a routine step, its value remains critical. In 2023 alone, wrong-site surgeries rose by 26%, underscoring the need for meaningful, consistent pauses in the operating room.

Considered the final safety check, Time Out is most effective when every member of the surgical team takes ownership. Engagement from schedulers, nurses, and surgeons alike strengthens accountability and fosters a collective commitment to patient safety. A standardized yet personalized approach to the process helps reinforce its importance and encourages meaningful participation.

Strong communication is central to this effort. Team members must feel empowered to speak up when something seems off. This level of advocacy isn't just encouraged; it's essential. AORN promotes scenario-based training and [education](#) to help normalize this behavior and build confidence, especially among newer professionals.

When surgical teams work in environments that support raising concerns without fear of judgment, patient safety becomes a shared priority. In the earlier example, the patient never knew how close the team came to a serious error - because the system worked exactly as it should. That's the kind of teamwork AORN wants every operating room to strive for.

The Association of periOperative Registered Nurses (AORN) represents the interests of more than 200,000 perioperative nurses by providing evidence-based resources, education, and support to advance safe patient care. AORN's mission is to promote safety and optimal outcomes for patients undergoing operative and other invasive procedures.

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