



# Respiratory Therapy Society of Ontario Société de la thérapie respiratoire de l'Ontario

May 12, 2006

The Toronto Star - Letters to the Editor  
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Dear Sir:

## **Re: May 6, 2006 article: Should we let nurses deliver anesthetics?**

Regarding the May 6, 2006 article: *Should we let nurses deliver anesthetics?*, True, Anesthesia Assistants are not Nurse Anesthetists, however to suggest as Doris Grinspun has in the earlier article, that they are a "band aide" response to the Anesthesiologist shortage is a discredit to the dedicated Registered Respiratory Therapists (RRT) who are the Anesthesia Assistants in Ontario. RRTs are educated with a unique body of knowledge and skill set which supports them in the Anesthesia Assistant role.

What needs to be understood and appreciated is that it is an interdisciplinary team of dedicated, skilled health care providers that deliver health care to the citizens of Ontario. If you were to require critical care in an Intensive Care Unit, you would be supported by a team of health care professionals each providing their particular skill and expertise to support your recovery. Operating Rooms have also recognized this team concept of care delivery, as they have utilized Anesthesia Assistants as members of the anesthesia team. These skilled Anesthesia Assistants do reduce surgical wait times. With additional post graduate training they initiate and manage conscious sedation which is widely used to support patients receiving corrective cataract surgery. Anesthesia Assistants provide this support with the supervision of an Anesthesiologist who is managing more complex cases in an adjacent room.

When looking for solutions to Ontario's health care delivery challenges we would do well to keep an open mind to different options and be supportive of what we all bring to the patient's bedside. When it has all been said and done it is the patient who ultimately benefits from the expertise and richness of the interdisciplinary team.

Sincerely,

RESPIRATORY THERAPY SOCIETY OF ONTARIO