



## **SATS POSITION STATEMENT**

### **THE PERI-OPERATIVE PRACTITIONER, "SCRUBSISTER" ACTING AS FIRST ASSISTANT DURING SURGERY**

Historically the Registered PERI-OPERATIVE NURSE has been recognized as part of the surgical team. In the past however the availability of general medical practitioners as first assistant to the surgeon never allowed or demanded from the scrubsister to act as first assistant. With the changing of the health environment, and the migration of medical practitioners, a situation was created where the scrubsister now has to fulfill dual roles acting as assistant and simultaneously taking control of the table

Within our present Scope of Practice the role of the professional nurse as first assistant is still not recognised, leaving the practitioner vulnerable and without any protection.

### **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT SATS RECOMMENDS**

- That Operating room managers be made aware of the legal implications and risks to the patient and the staff( Refer SANC & HPC)
- That where this practice exists the registered peri-operative practitioners act only as first assistant and a second peri-operative practitioner act as Scrubsister
- That the registered peri-operative practitioners has the right to refuse to participate in such a procedure if she is of the opinion that she will place the patient and herself at risk
- The registered peri-operative practitioner gives the manager written notice of her concerns.
- That in an emergency situation the registered peri-operative practitioners will evaluate, and make an informed decision of the situation
- That the operating room manager be informed of the decision
- That an appeal be made to the Nursing Council, training schools and Universities to investigate a training program to include the role of the first assistant
- That the role of the registered peri-operative practitioner as first assistant be defined, and recognized as a career development step.
- The recognition of the need that exist for the registered peri-operative practitioners to act as first assistant during surgery
- That suitable compensation be paid to the registered peri-operative practitioner that act as first assistant

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