



The Workforce Shortage: A Message from AST



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The shortage of CSTs involves many separate but related issues, including the decrease in the number of accredited surgical technology programs resulting in the decrease of new CSTs entering the workforce, leading to an increase in non-accredited programs, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training.

As a result, and because of high demand for surgical technologists, AST has been and continues to be very concerned about the increased number of nonaccredited programs, apprenticeships, and on-the-job training which are counter to the organization's goals and to the 50-year evolution of the profession. Here's where AST stands on the following issues:

- The cornerstone of AST's advocacy efforts are the requirements that all surgical technologists must be graduates of nationally accredited surgical technology programs and certified as a CST by the NBSTSA.
- AST opposes the development of non-accredited programs that are not otherwise in the process of seeking accreditation.
- AST opposes on-the-job training.
- AST opposes apprenticeships that do not meet the educational requirements to become a professional certified surgical technologist.
- AST opposes alternative credentials and exams that have not been developed collaboratively with our profession but instead provide certification pathways for those from non-accredited programs, unaccredited apprenticeships, and on-the-job training.

Promoting our education, accreditation, and certification values while combatting those we oppose requires that we work together.

Interested in joining the fight?

Here are some of the tools that are available to you so you can join the fight:

- **American College of Surgeons: Statement on Surgical Technology Training and Certification** – ACS has been a sponsoring organization of the ARC/STSA and the NBSTSA for over 50 years and has developed this statement that supports the education surgical technologists, the accreditation of all surgical technology programs, and the certification of all graduates. This statement has also been approved by members organizations of the Council on Surgical and Perioperative Safety (CSPS): American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA); American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA); American Association of Surgical Physician Assistants (AASPA); and American Society of PeriAnesthesia Nurses (ASPAN). **AST's Position Statement on Accreditation Process, Certification, Official Title of Profession, and On-the-Job**

Training – This statement was recently approved by the AST Board of Directors, reaffirming our long-standing values and positions.

- **AST Encourages Healthcare Facility Leaders to Support Local, Accredited Surgical Technology Educational Programs**
- **Can Hospitals & ASCs Require CST Certification in States without Regulation?**
Yes.
- **Advocating for Accredited Surgical Technology Education Before Policymakers**
- **Recommendations for CSTs, Program Directors, and State Assemblies When Addressing On-the-Job Training with Healthcare Facility Administration**
- **Message to Surgical Technology Program Directors Regarding Alternative Certification Credentials from AST, ARC/STSA, and NBSTSA** – A joint letter regarding alternative credentials.