



AST Encourages Healthcare Facility Leaders to Support Local, Accredited Surgical Technology Educational Programs

Published March 2023

AST Encourages Healthcare Facility Leaders to Support Local, Accredited Surgical Technology Educational Programs (March 2023)

AST recognizes a need for more Certified Surgical Technologists. AST encourages healthcare facilities to support CAAHEP-accredited surgical technology education when growing the workforce. Supporting accredited education, rather than competing pathways, greatly benefits healthcare facilities long-term by 1.) keeping up surgeon and workforce morale, 2.) keeping a competent workforce that minimizes costly and harmful mistakes, and 3.) keeping training in schools, where it belongs. On-the-job training is not a long-term solution. Ultimately, it is a losing proposition for healthcare facility profit, management, surgeons, nurses, surgical technologists, trainees, risk managers, and patients.

Healthcare facilities can help grow the workforce and support accredited education in the following ways:

- 1. Keep Local Programs Open by Offering Ample Clinical Placements to Accredited Programs.** Healthcare facilities must continue to offer clinical rotations to their local, accredited surgical technology programs to ensure their local programs do not turn away students due to a lack of rotations. Programs full of students reduce cost per capita and ensure program sustainability.
- 2. Work with CAAHEP-accredited surgical technology programs to develop apprenticeships.** Hospitals and ASCs are starting to grow their own by sending sterile processing techs and other personnel to accredited surgical technology programs. Hospitals then pay for clinical hours, and even subsidize or cover tuition.
- 3. Keep Local Programs Open by Helping Local, Accredited Educational Programs Fill Cohorts.** Accredited surgical technology education programs are high-tech and have overhead. Full classrooms are beneficial for the school, workforce, and healthcare facilities. AST encourages healthcare facilities to continue their community outreach, career fairs, and engagement with local high schools to generate interest in surgical technology.
- 4. Support the Development of New Accredited Surgical Technology Programs.** Healthcare facilities are encouraged to work with community colleges and technical schools that do not have a program in underserved areas to open new programs.
- 5. Direct Hospital Foundation Funding to Surgical Technology Scholarships for CAAHEP-accredited Programs.** Scholarships support the local community and create a robust workforce that costs less long-term than a short-supply/ high-demand workforce comprised increasingly of travelers.
- 6. Seek Funding For Scholarships, Student Loans, Surgical Technology Programs, & CAAHEP-accredited Apprenticeships.** Federal, state, county, and private money is increasingly available.

To find a list of CAAHEP-accredited programs in your area, visit www.caahep.org and select "Students, Find an Accredited Program."