



1400 Crystal Drive  
Suite 900  
Arlington, VA 22202  
Phone: 202/789-1890  
Fax: 202/789-1899  
[apicinfo@apic.org](mailto:apicinfo@apic.org)  
[www.apic.org](http://www.apic.org)

March 18, 2021

Oregon House Committee on Health Care  
900 Court St., NE, Room 453  
Salem, Oregon 97301

*Regarding: House Bill 2464*

Dear Chairwoman Prusak, Vice-Chairs Hayden and Salinas:

The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC), a nonprofit, multidisciplinary organization whose mission is to create a safer world through the prevention of infection, urges you to oppose House Bill 2464, which would allow a person to practice surgical technology after having completed, or being in the process of completing, certain apprenticeship programs.

According to the CDC, each year in the U.S. there are an estimated 110,800 surgical site infections (SSI). Unfortunately, 3% of patients that acquire an SSI will die. Additionally, these infections cost the U.S. healthcare system more than \$3.3 billion and add 1 million inpatient days.<sup>1</sup> Surgical technologists provide critical support for surgical teams thereby contributing to infection prevention and control in operating rooms. They are responsible for preparing an operating room and helping to prepare surgical team members for the procedure. While surgical technologists provide important expertise prior to a surgical procedure, they also ensure that all equipment is accounted for at the conclusion of a procedure. These important support functions protect patients from a variety of risks during an operation, especially infection.

Currently, surgical technologists are required to have an associate degree with a core curriculum that includes: anatomy, physiology, anesthesia, microbiology, robotics, and an understanding of sterile and non-sterile processes.<sup>2</sup> In addition, they are required to demonstrate their specialized knowledge by passing a rigorous exam to achieve certification which must be maintained. This ensures surgical technologists have both a practical and theoretical understanding of their profession. While an in-person training component is necessary for any healthcare professional, removing the need for specialized knowledge prior to practice could set a dangerous precedent. Patients are at their most vulnerable when on an operating table. Having individuals without a proper background in human anatomy or without prior infection prevention education working in this highly controlled environment could negatively affect the standard of care. Removing this requirement could further increase the number of infections currently occurring after surgery.

We respectfully request that you oppose House Bill 2464 to help ensure that Oregon patients have the safest, risk controlled surgical environments. APIC believes this can only be provided by a healthcare workforce that is properly educated, trained, and certified.

---

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, January). Procedure-associated Module, SSI Events. National Healthcare Safety Network. <https://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/PDFs/pscManual/9pscSSIcurrent.Pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Association of Surgical Technologists. (2011). Core Curriculum for Surgical Technology. Sixth Edition. [https://www.ast.org/uploadedFiles/Main\\_Site/Content/Educators/Core%20Curriculum%20v2.pdf](https://www.ast.org/uploadedFiles/Main_Site/Content/Educators/Core%20Curriculum%20v2.pdf).



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann Marie Pettis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ann Marie Pettis, RN, BSN, CIC, FAPIC  
APIC President