

American Association for Respiratory Care

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Position Statement

Statement of Principles

The American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC), a national society of health care professionals, is sponsored by the American College of Chest Physicians, the American Society of Anesthesiologists, and the American Thoracic Society.* The Association is dedicated to maintaining the highest standards of practice in respiratory care. Respiratory care is defined as a health care specialty under medical direction in the assessment, treatment, management, control, diagnostic evaluation, and care of patients with deficiencies and abnormalities of the cardiopulmonary system.

Respiratory care shall mean the diagnostic and therapeutic use of the following: medical gases and administration apparatus, environmental control systems, humidification, aerosols, medications, ventilatory support, bronchopulmonary drainage, pulmonary rehabilitation, cardiopulmonary resuscitation and airway management.

Specific testing techniques are employed in respiratory care to assist in diagnosis, monitoring, treatment, and research of cardiopulmonary pathology. This shall be understood to include measurement of ventilatory volumes, airway pressures, gas flows, blood gas analysis and other related physiologic monitoring.

The respiratory therapy technician and respiratory therapist are integral members of the hospital based health care team working under the supervision and guidance of a physician. They shall work together to determine appropriate diagnoses and administer appropriate treatment for acute and chronic pulmonary and cardiovascular disorders.

The AARC recognizes the need to assure high quality patient care at affordable cost. To that end, we believe a combination of specialized formal education and clinical training is the best method to develop highly skilled respiratory care personnel. The AARC endorses the standards of practice adopted by the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations as an additional quality assurance mechanism and sees uniform credentialing as another positive step toward assuring high quality health care. The concept of peer review as a quality assurance mechanism is attractive to the AARC, and we strongly endorse efforts to develop various peer review programs which involve respiratory therapists and respiratory therapy technicians in audits and other review techniques.

*Other sponsoring organizations include: American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Allergists, and Society of Critical Care Medicine, and the National Association of Medical Directors of Respiratory Care.

Effective 11/78