

## American Association for Respiratory Care

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### Position Statement

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# Age Appropriate Care of the Respiratory Patient

Patients with respiratory disease should receive the highest quality of care in a timely and professional manner. Respiratory Therapists (RTs) have the training and expertise to deliver respiratory care to all age groups, from neonate to elderly. RTs are trained, tested, uniquely qualified, and specifically credentialed to provide respiratory care as attested in official supporting statements by the American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA), the American College of Chest Physicians (ACCP), and the National Association for Medical Direction of Respiratory Care (NAMDRRC).

RTs provide services to all age groups across the continuum of care, including physician's offices, acute care hospitals, sub-acute care facilities, rehabilitation facilities, skilled nursing facilities, hospice facilities, and patients' homes. RTs should participate in the initial assessment of the patient to maximize the effective and efficient use of respiratory care service resources. The RT should work under a medical director and provide respiratory care services under medical direction, as ordered by a physician and/or in accordance with a prescribed respiratory care protocol or clinical pathway, and should offer recommendations for an appropriate regimen of care. RTs should be a part of the team providing education of the patient, family members, and other health caregivers regarding respiratory care to ensure appropriate disease management.

In accordance with the recommendations of two Education Consensus Conferences, the American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) encourages respiratory care educators/managers to include: a gerontology module in respiratory care training program curricula, and clinical training at long term care and rehabilitation facilities to provide students with the opportunity to learn how to appropriately plan for and provide respiratory care services for geriatric patients. Topics focused on the geriatric patient and his/her special health care needs in departmental continuing education programs to assure the desired quality of care for this patient population, and to meet the requirements of health care organization accreditation for age-specific professional training.

Effective 1997

Reviewed 2001

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