



Association
of Anaesthetists



American Society of
Anesthesiologists™



Australian Society of
Anaesthetists™



CANADIAN
ANESTHESIOLOGISTS'
SOCIETY



New Zealand
SOCIETY OF
Anaesthetists



SASA
SOUTH AFRICAN SOCIETY OF ANAESTHESIOLOGISTS

Environment and Sustainability Statement from the Common Issue Group partners

The World Health Organization recognises the climate crisis as the major threat to human health in the 21st century and growing scientific evidence points towards a need to address the contribution of humanity to the climate change. The global healthcare industry is a significant contributor of greenhouse gases and other environmental pollutants and hence, contributory to the impact of climate change on human health.

The Common Issues Group (CIG) is a representative group drawing its membership from the senior leadership of the American Society of Anesthesiologists, the Association of Anaesthetists [of Great Britain & Ireland], the Australian Society of Anaesthetists, the Canadian Anesthesiologists' Society, the New Zealand Society of Anaesthetists and the South African Society of Anaesthetists. The group functions through mutual cooperation between its members.

The purpose of this joint statement is to denote that the medical societies listed above recognise that the professional actions of anaesthesiologists have an environmental impact and that this, in turn, may affect health, wellbeing and our economies both now and in the future.

Introduction

We recognise that the professional actions of anaesthesiologists have an environmental impact and that this, in turn, may affect health, wellbeing and our economies both now and in the future.

We are committed to promoting environmental sustainability across our organisations' activities as well as encouraging and supporting action by our members. This includes, but is not limited to, mitigating the adverse effects of climate change, prudent use of natural resources such as minimisation of water usage, energy consumption and waste generation.

Examples include: minimising waste anaesthetic gases and intravenous drug waste; minimising single-use disposable medical devices; encouragement of environmentally preferable drugs and devices; as well as encouragement of circular economy practices. The objective is to minimise the adverse effects of healthcare pollution on population health, and ecological justice.

We will collaborate with each other and other stakeholders to identify and act on opportunities to improve environmental sustainability in the perioperative arena generally, and anaesthesia in particular.

Our approach will run alongside our continuing work to ensure the safety of patients and the wellbeing of our members and their colleagues.

Priorities

Priority 1

To position our organisations as leaders in promoting sustainable healthcare, specifically the contribution of anaesthesia practice.

Priority 2

To commit to provide the latest scientific evidence, to educate and to share good practice to enable our members to minimise the environmental impact of their clinical practice.

Priority 3

To monitor and continually strive to improve our organisations' contributions to environmental and financial sustainability.

Priority 4

To promote the reduction of environmental and financial waste by individuals and organisations in healthcare delivery.

Statement of intent

- To promote the creation of sections for environmental sustainability within each anaesthesia society and to increase collaboration between anaesthesia societies on environmental sustainability issues
- To share resources such as educational material, research outputs
- To encourage educational activities including sessions on environment and sustainability at congresses/conferences, webinars, articles for member magazines
- To encourage research activities through collaborative data sharing, generation of funding opportunities, and overall support for industrial ecology and circular economy research, translational and implementation science
- To use our combined advocacy resources to petition key opinion leaders, politicians, and the media about environmental issues – specifically those related to our clinical practice
- To work with stakeholders (e.g. charities, third sector organisations, patient groups), our partners in industry, and the regulators to ensure environmental issues are highlighted
- To engage all stakeholders (anaesthesia providers, healthcare organisations, equipment manufacturers and suppliers) to work towards environmentally sustainable options (e.g. to work with manufacturers to be compliant with ISO 14040:2006)
- To monitor continuously our organisations' environmental impact (for example our headquarters, our educational activities) to minimise waste; include the results in our annual benchmarking
- To use our combined advocacy resources towards worldwide accessibility to environmentally friendlier technology (closed-circuit ventilation, target-controlled-infusion, mechanical carbon dioxide filtration, waste anaesthetic recapture systems, development of inhaled anaesthetics with no/negligible greenhouse gas effect)
- To ensure environmental and sustainability issues are a standing item on the agenda at each CIG meeting

July 2020