

# Exploring NUMC's Anesthesia Remediation and Refresher Program

Amy Gallagher

**N**assau University Medical Center (NUMC), a public teaching hospital, is also the home of the newly launched NuHealth Anesthesiology Remediation and Refresher Program (ARRP), which was launched with the mission to provide a broad experience in hospital anesthesiology and perioperative medicine in a supportive learning environment.

Marc. E. Koch, MD, MBA, FASA, President and CEO of Somnia Anesthesia Services, notes that the program is unique in several ways. It primarily aims to reintegrate anesthesiologists back into hospital practice who fall into one of four cohorts:

1. Cohort I: Ambulatory anesthesiologists who now wish to work in the hospital setting
2. Cohort II: Anesthesiologists who have been away from anesthesia altogether and wish to return
3. Cohort III: Anesthesiologists only able to work in a supervised environment per government agency
4. Cohort IV: Anesthesiologists facing board certification challenges

The goal of the program is to provide a comprehensive, hospital-based academic-style experience. It's for fully trained anesthesiologists who have completed the ABA certification process, unless the reason they are entering ARRP is to address a board certification issue. It is designed for anesthesiologists who seek to regain and modernize their knowledge and skills to successfully embark on the next phase of their career.

"The emphasis is on hands-on, supervised clinical experiences that are expanded and advanced as the rust comes off or as their knowledge or skills are refreshed and honed. Those who successfully complete the program should be able to make important clinical decisions and have the skills to perform a variety

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of major and minor hospital anesthetics," said Dr. Koch.

From governance, milestones, and evaluative points of view, the ARRP has been inspired by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) tenets, but it is not a residency or fellowship. It also brings to bear best practices tantamount to the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) by defining gaps in knowledge and skill gaps and the creation of an individual learning plan (ILP).

ASA was particularly helpful according to Koch.

"ARRP embodies some of the ACGME governance and best practices while marshaling ACCME teachings with respect to adult learners," said Elizabeth Snyder, MBA, who serves as Director, Project Management & Education for Somnia. Participating physicians will be awarded AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™ for their activities.

Dr. Koch added, "although the tactical mission is the execution of an assessment-driven ILP, we are mindful of the ultimate strategic goal – for participants to confidently reenter hospital practice without, or with fewer, limitations or encumbrances."

Accessing the wisdom of ACCME and ASA educators and leaders, the collective group of professionals who founded the new program in December 2021 include Ken Freese, MD, Senior Advisor,

ARRP, NUMC; Maureen Hutcheon, LMSW, MPA, Administrator, Surgery, Orthopedics and Anesthesia, NUMC; Robert M. Yost, MS, Dean of Academic Affairs, NUMC; Paul Weinberg, MD, Department of Anesthesiology Chairman and ARRP Program Director, NUMC; Molly Russell, Program Administrator; and Megan Williams, Practice Administrator, NUMC; along with Elizabeth Snyder and Dr. Koch

"This program was a product of the collaborative and hard work of the many, not the work of any one person. It involved careful and methodical planning, many meetings, and addressing every concern voiced by the workgroup or other hospital constituents – probably well over 1,000 hours of planning," explained Dr. Koch.

Alongside assessing and addressing gaps in knowledge and skills are gaining up-to-date fluencies on CMS and accreditation standards skills as well as the modern expectations undergirding professionalism. The six- to 18-month program has four phases: observation, one-on-one work, direction, and general supervision. Throughout the phases, it is about experiencing the journey together with colleagues as part of a lifelong learning process. ARRP will be encouraging its enrollees to enroll in MOCA.

"We can already identify the value of the work and how the program is helping others," said ARRP's Administrator

Molly Russell. "Working together, hand in hand, communicating daily, several times throughout the day, is very rewarding. While the credentialing can take several months, we are big supporters of empowerment and encouragement," she said.

The application and interview process is extensive and can involve as many as eight separate interviews and exhaustive background checks. Progression in, and completion of, the program is competency-based, as determined by a committee that reviews evaluations. Formative feedback is provided to participants after each case.

"Since advancement is competency-based, it's hard to precisely know how long participants will be in the program. There might be some that need only six months, and others perhaps as much as 18. Our hunch is that most will need about nine months, plus or minus three months; but even so, it's really about life-long learning and leveraging MOCA and other ASA learning opportunities," said Dr. Koch.

"It's not a time-based program like a residency; it's competency-based, where credits are applied according to the ILP," said Snyder.

Since its launch in 2021, the group has interviewed 30 applicants to accept the first participant and has subsequently accepted four additional candidates who have or will be entering soon. This first participant is expected to complete the program shortly.

"The program is unique in that the participants are paid and will be guaranteed a position somewhere once the program is complete," said Russell.

"This program has been meticulously and collaboratively planned out. Its conception and development have been multidisciplinary in nature and aided by, or inspired after, getting input from national organizations, such as ASA and ACCME. Participants are paid a fair and cohort-specific wage as they work their way through an ILP designed to close their gaps in knowledge and skill – everyone is guaranteed a position once they finish up. We are welcoming all comers who think we can help!"

For more information about ARRP, visit [asamonitor.pub/3OqBq8F](http://asamonitor.pub/3OqBq8F). ■