

Health Bulletin

Making Surgery Safer For Active Boomers

(NAPSA)—An interesting thing is happening to baby boomers on their way to retirement: While their professional careers are winding down, their trips to the operating room are increasing due to active lifestyles.

The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) offers baby boomers some perspective on physical activities and lifestyle trends that could ultimately lead to anesthesia and surgery.

As more baby boomers enter their 60s, the reports of activity-related injuries and conditions such as arthritis, joint and back problems, and coronary artery disease experienced by this age group have also increased. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, older adults are the predominant recipients of health care services, including 50 percent of hospital care, 70 percent of home health care, and 90 percent of ambulatory care.

Many problems can occur when aging, less resilient bodies don't respond well to intense physical activities. In addition to the urgent care these injuries require, a common expectation of baby boomers is having their health restored to pre-injury or pre-ailment condition.

"Americans are living longer, more active lives," said Matthew D'Angelo, a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) who works in the Division of Trauma Anesthesiology at the University of Maryland Medical System. "It was rare 16 years ago to hear about surgical repairs to the rotator cuff and intricate ankle and elbow ailments in patients older than 50, but now they are routine."

"Older patients have unique anesthesia needs, and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists are



A growing number of boomers are finding that problems can occur when aging, less resilient bodies don't respond well to intense physical activities.

well qualified to take care of them," said AANA president Jim Walker, CRNA, DNP. "As a baby boomer myself, I feel qualified to say there are many great things about getting older. However, our increased vulnerability to injuries and other conditions that may require anesthesia for surgery or pain management isn't one of them."

Walker suggests that by using good judgment and not pushing their bodies beyond reasonable limits, baby boomers should be able to avoid getting acquainted with their anesthesia provider and surgeon any sooner than necessary.

Founded in 1931, the AANA is the professional organization for more than 40,000 CRNAs who safely administer 32 million anesthetics to patients each year in the United States. CRNAs are the sole anesthesia providers in more than two-thirds of all rural hospitals. To learn more, visit www.aana.com.