

## **Insertion and Maintenance of Vascular Catheters by Respiratory Therapists**

The American Association for Respiratory Care (AARC) endorses the use of qualified and competent respiratory therapist to insert vascular cannulation lines and to perform maintenance of vascular lines. The respiratory therapist's education provides extensive training in cardiorespiratory anatomy, physiology, and pathophysiology. These fundamentals of Respiratory Care education make the respiratory therapists uniquely qualified to undertake further education to be competent in this procedure.

Vascular access catheters (VAC) are important instruments in the care of acute and critically ill, and those with chronic illnesses. The increasing needs for timelier VAC cannulation as well as the need to manage adverse events of insertion and miss-positioned catheters, pulsatile blood flow, daily site assessment and securement and daily maintenance provides impetus for respiratory therapist to perform these tasks. Respiratory therapists are available around the clock seven (7) days a week. They are excellent resources for inserting and maintaining vascular access devices.

The requisite education for a respiratory therapist to be qualified to insert and maintain cannulation of VACs should include specific training, proof of competence and continuing education as outlined by those institutions that use respiratory therapist to perform this procedure.

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