



Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists

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Legislative Resolutions Recognize CRNAs in Pennsylvania

HARRISBURG (Feb. 4, 2020) --- Because of the vital role certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) play in protecting patient safety and controlling rising health-care costs, the state General Assembly adopted two separate resolutions to formally recognize the high-quality, affordable care these advanced practice nurses provide in Pennsylvania.

The resolutions --- [S.R. 288](#) by Sen. John R. Gordner (R-Columbia) and [H.R. 684](#) by Rep. Stephen Barrar (R-Chester/Delaware) --- were adopted unanimously by both the House and Senate this week as the legislature reconvened session. The votes also served as the capstone for the 21st annual National CRNA Week, when patients, hospital administrators, health-care professionals, policy-makers, and others learn more about the work CRNAs perform.

“Senator Gordner and Representative Barrar have been longtime champions for CRNAs in Pennsylvania, and we appreciate their continued support,” said Angelarosa G. DiDonato, DNP, CRNA, president of the Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists (PANA). “More and more people are starting to understand and appreciate the role CRNAs play as an advocate for our patients and affordable, quality health care in Pennsylvania.”

CRNAs are the hands-on providers of anesthesia care, operating safely in every setting where anesthesia is administered, including hospital operating and delivery rooms; ambulatory surgical centers; the offices of dentists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, and plastic surgeons; pain management centers and more.

The nation’s 54,000 CRNAs and student registered nurse anesthetists safely and cost-effectively provide more than 49 million anesthetics each year. PANA itself represents more than 3,700 CRNAs and students across the state --- one of the largest contingencies in the country.

CRNAs are the main providers of anesthesia care in rural communities and medically underserved areas, delivering essential health care and preventing gaps in services. CRNAs also are battle-tested, serving on the front lines since World War I as the main providers of anesthesia care to U.S. military personnel in austere combat theaters.

CRNAs not only provide routine anesthesia care, but also quickly respond to patient changes and emergencies during surgical and medical procedures, ensuring patient health and safety.

In fact, with advanced degrees and a high level of education and clinical experience, CRNAs are able to deliver the same safe, high-quality anesthesia care as other anesthesia professionals but at a lower cost, helping to control the nation's rising health-care costs.

Because of their training and experience, numerous medical studies show there is no statistical difference in patient outcomes when a nurse anesthetist provides treatment. In fact, these studies by nationally recognized health-care policy and research organizations prove that CRNAs provide high-quality care, even for rare and difficult procedures.

Pennsylvania is recognized as a leader in anesthesia education and training, with 13 programs spread throughout Allegheny, Columbia, Erie, Lackawanna, Lehigh, Montgomery, Philadelphia, Westmoreland and York counties.

Despite these advancements, Pennsylvania remains one of only two states (New York is the other) that fails to recognize CRNA designation in some form.

There is no formal definition for "certified registered nurse anesthetist" under the state's Professional Nursing Law, meaning they are recognized only as registered nurses (RNs), not CRNAs. Professional designation legislation ([S.B. 325](#)), also sponsored by Sen. Gordner, passed the Senate last session but has not yet been taken up by the House.

For more information about certified registered nurse anesthetists in Pennsylvania, visit www.PANAforQualityCare.com or follow along on social media via Twitter at [@PANACRNA](#) or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/PANACRNA.

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