



# Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**CONTACT:** Kurt Knaus, 717-724-2866

## **Senate Committee Unanimously Approves CRNA Designation Bill**

**HARRISBURG (June 12, 2019)** --- The Senate Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee today unanimously approved legislation (S.B. 325) that would formally recognize certified registered nurse anesthetists as “CRNAs” under Pennsylvania statute.

Pennsylvania remains one of just two states that do not recognize CRNAs. Under the state’s Professional Nursing Law, there is no official definition for “certified registered nurse anesthetist,” meaning these professionals are recognized only as registered nurses.

The measure, which is sponsored by state Sen. John R. Gordner (R-Columbia), now goes to the full Senate for consideration. Rep. Tarah Toohil is sponsoring a companion bill (H.B. 1064) in the House. These professional designation bills are simple, non-controversial title recognition measures, which is why similar measures have passed in previous legislative sessions.

“It’s long past time to finally recognize the importance of CRNAs and appreciate the value of the men and women behind the surgical masks,” said Derek Reckard, president of the Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists, which represents more than 3,700 CRNAs and students in Pennsylvania.

CRNAs operate 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 lack of professional designation brings logistical and financial challenges for CRNAs.

Pennsylvania CRNAs who serve in the military must secure designation in another state to serve as an armed forces anesthesia provider because the commonwealth does not recognize CRNAs. Pennsylvania-based military CRNAs pay more traveling out of state to obtain credits or meet other legal requirements to stay licensed and credentialed. They also pay more out-of-pocket expenses renewing multiple licenses.

Pennsylvania CRNAs also cannot assist on rapid response teams in states affected by natural disasters because they lack the formal credentials.

Moreover, with 13 nurse anesthetist programs here, Pennsylvania ranks among the top draws nationally for CRNA students. But that leadership position in education and training is at risk once students realize they face hurdles to getting credentialed after graduation.

After receiving training in Pennsylvania, many CRNAs relocate to states where they are fully recognized and credentialed for clinical practice, contributing to “brain drain.”

“Professional designation in Pennsylvania would keep CRNAs here and help us achieve our shared missions of keeping patients safe, ensuring access to quality care and reigning in rising health-care costs,” Reckard said.

Learn more about CRNAs in Pennsylvania at [www.PANAforQualityCare.com](http://www.PANAforQualityCare.com). Additional details are available via Twitter at [@PANACRNA](https://twitter.com/PANACRNA) and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/PANACRNA](https://www.facebook.com/PANACRNA).

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