



Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists

CRNA Professional Designation

May 2020

The Pennsylvania Association of Nurse Anesthetists (PANA) represents more than 3,700 certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) and students (SRNAs) 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.

CRNA Designation in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania is one of just two states (New York is the other) that fail to recognize CRNAs in some form. Because there is no definition for “certified registered nurse anesthetist” under the state’s Professional Nursing Law, CRNAs are recognized only as registered nurses (RNs), not as CRNAs. Bipartisan measures have been introduced (and have passed in previous sessions) to formally recognize nurse anesthetists as “CRNAs” under Pennsylvania statute and finally acknowledge CRNAs for their education and training. **These professional designation bills are simple, non-controversial title recognition measures.**

Challenges that Pennsylvania CRNAs face without title designation:

- **COVID-19 RESPONSE:** Pennsylvania CRNAs are unable to respond fully to the state’s COVID-19 emergency preparedness plan. Health-care systems sought out the unique skillset of CRNAs during the health crisis, yet were restricted to utilize CRNAs to the extent of their education and training due to the CRNA licensure in the state. **Pennsylvania’s crisis response capabilities are diminished.**
- **MILITARY SERVICE:** Pennsylvania CRNAs who serve in the military must secure designation in another state to serve as an armed forces anesthesia provider because our commonwealth does not officially recognize CRNAs. **That brings logistical and financial challenges.** Pennsylvania-based military CRNAs pay more traveling out of state to obtain the CEUs or to meet other legal requirements to stay licensed and credentialed. They also pay more out-of-pocket expenses renewing multiple licenses.
- **STUDENT RETENTION:** With 13 nurse anesthetist programs here, Pennsylvania ranks among the top draws nationally for CRNA students. **Retention of these advanced professionals should be a priority.** Instead, many relocate to states where they can utilize the full scope of their education and training in clinical practices. Even then, without an official CRNA designation, many graduating students wait as long as six months to get credentialed in out-of-state facilities, as state boards must verify that the students meet the requirements necessary to be classified appropriately there.

Professional designation in Pennsylvania would help us achieve our shared mission of keeping patients safe, ensuring access to quality care, and reigning in rising health-care costs. I hope we have your support.

More Information: www.panaforqualitycare.com

Pennsylvania Nurse Anesthetist Programs

With 13 nurse anesthetist programs here, Pennsylvania ranks among the top draws nationally for CRNA students. The programs include the following:

1. *Allegheny Valley Hospital / La Roche College School of Nurse Anesthesia*
2. *University of Scranton School of Nurse Anesthesia*
3. *Cedar Crest College Nurse Anesthesia Program*
4. *Crozer Chester Medical Center / Villanova University Nurse Anesthesia Program*
5. *Drexel University Nurse Anesthesia Program*
6. *Excelsior Health School Anesthesia*
7. *Frank J. Tornetta School of Anesthesia at Montgomery Hospital / La Salle University Nurse Anesthesia Program*
8. *Geisinger Health System / Bloomsburg University of Pa. Nurse Anesthesia Program*
9. *Thomas Jefferson University Jefferson School of Nursing Nurse Anesthesia Program*
10. *University of Pennsylvania School of Nursing Nurse Anesthesia Program*
11. *University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing Nurse Anesthesia Program*
12. *UPMC Hamot School of Anesthesia / Gannon University*
13. *York College of Pa. / WellSpan Health Nurse Anesthetist Program*

Facts about CRNAs in Pennsylvania:

- In Pennsylvania, **education and clinical training for nurse anesthetists is extensive** and requires national board certification. In total, CRNAs ultimately complete approximately 9,600 clinical hours including their intensive care unit clinical experience, anesthesia clinical training and undergraduate nursing clinical experience before board certification as a CRNA.
- Patient safety data from these states do not differ compared to national statistics. In fact, **numerous medical studies show there is no statistical difference** in patient outcomes when a nurse anesthetist provides treatment, compared to an anesthesiologist, even for rare and difficult procedures.
- CRNAs are battle-tested providers, with a history that spans to the Civil War. Nurse anesthetists have been the **main providers of anesthesia care to U.S. military personnel on the front lines** since World War I, and remain the primary anesthesia providers in austere combat theaters. In fact, CRNAs most commonly are the only anesthesia providers in the military's forward surgical teams.
- CRNAs remain the **primary providers of anesthesia care in rural America**, enabling health-care facilities in these medically underserved areas to offer obstetrical, surgical, pain management and trauma stabilization services. Without these advanced practice nurses, facilities would not be able to maintain these services, forcing many rural Americans to travel long distances for such services. In some states, CRNAs are the sole providers in nearly 100 percent of the rural hospitals.
- CRNAs are **far less costly for hospitals to employ**, so rural hospitals, for example, are able to staff emergency services with in-house CRNAs 24 hours a day, 7 days a week so that every Pennsylvania resident has access to these needed services.