Scope of Practice

Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants (CAAs) practice in the Anesthesia Care Team (ACT) with Physician Anesthesiologist oversight. The scope of clinical practice for CAAs is identical to that of nurse anesthetists working in the ACT.

The scope of practice of CAAs is determined by the following:

- The Physician Anesthesiologist or Practice Group
- The state's board of medicine
- The hospital credentialing body
- Any applicable state statute or regulation

Job Description

The Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant (CAA) is qualified by academic and clinical education to provide anesthetic care under the supervision and delegation of a qualified physician anesthesiologist. The physician anesthesiologist who is responsible for the CAA is available to prescribe and direct particular therapeutic interventions.

By virtue of the basic medical science education and clinical practice experience, the Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant is proficient in the use of contemporary patient monitoring and interpretation of data in all anesthesia care environments. The CAA provides patient care that allows the supervising physician anesthesiologist to use his or her own medical education more efficiently and effectively.

The Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant is prepared to gather patient data, perform patient evaluation, and to administer and document the therapeutic plan that has been formulated for the anesthetic care of the patient. The tasks performed by CAAs reflect regional variations in anesthesia practice and state regulatory factors.

Under the direction of a physician anesthesiologist, in agreement with the ASA Statement on the Anesthesia Care Team (ACT) and in accordance with the AAAA Statement on the ACT, the Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant's functions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- developing and implementing an anesthesia care plan for a patient;
- obtaining a comprehensive patient history and performing relevant elements of a physical exam;
- performing preoperative and post-operative anesthetic evaluations and maintaining patient progress notes;
- ordering and performing preoperative patient consultations;
- ordering preoperative medications, including controlled substances, which may be administered before the supervising anesthesiologist cosigns;

- changing or discontinuing a medical treatment plan after consulting with the supervising anesthesiologist;
- obtaining informed consent for anesthesia or related procedures;
- ordering the perioperative continuation of current medications, which may be administered before the supervising anesthesiologist cosigns;
- pretesting and calibrating anesthesia delivery systems and obtaining and interpreting information from the systems and from monitors;
- implementing medically accepted monitoring techniques;
- performing basic and advanced airway interventions, including, but not limited to, endotracheal laryngeal mask insertion and other advanced airways techniques;
- establishing peripheral intravenous lines, including subcutaneous lidocaine use;
- performing invasive procedures including but not limited to arterial lines, central lines, and Swan Ganz catheters;
- performing general anesthesia, including induction, maintenance, emergence and procedures associated with general anesthesia, such as gastric intubation;
- administering anesthetic drugs, adjuvant drugs, and accessory drugs;
- administering vasoactive drugs and starting and titrating vasoactive infusions to treat patient responses to anesthesia;
- performing, maintaining, evaluating and managing epidural, spinal and regional anesthesia including catheters;
- performing monitored anesthesia care;
- obtaining venous and arterial blood samples;
- administering blood, blood products, and supportive fluids;
- performing, ordering and interpreting appropriate preoperative, point of care, intra-operative or postoperative diagnostic tests or procedures;
- obtaining and administering perioperative anesthesia and related pharmaceutical agents, including intravenous fluids and blood products;
- managing the patient while in the preoperative suite, recovery area, or labor suites;
- ordering postoperative sedation, anxiolysis or analgesia, postoperative respiratory therapy and medicines to treat patient responses to anesthesia and ordering postoperative oxygen therapy, including initial ventilator therapy, ordering, which may be administered before the supervising anesthesiologist cosigns;
- initiating and managing cardiopulmonary resuscitation in response to a life-threatening situation;
- participating in administrative, research and clinical teaching activities including supervising student anesthesiologist assistants and other students involved in anesthesia education; and
performing such other tasks not prohibited by law that an anesthesiologist assistant has been trained and is proficient to perform.