NEBRASKA

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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Pete Ricketts, Governor

August 24, 2022

Ron Briel
DHHS Program Specialist, Credentialing Review
Licensure Unit DHHS Licensure Unit
PO Box 94986 Lincoln NE 68509-4986

Dear Mr. Briel:

The Nebraska Board of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRN Board) voted in opposition to the proposed credentialing application of the Anesthesiology Assistant (AA) at their August 23, 2022, meeting. The APRN Board's opposition to the AA centers on the impact that this new category of provider would have on existing Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesia (CRNA) education programs in Nebraska.

The introduction of AAs to the state of Nebraska will have a detrimental impact on the numbers of CRNAs educated and employed in Nebraska by creating unnecessary competition for education and jobs in the field of anesthesia. AAs must work under direct supervision of a physician anesthesiologist. This requirement creates an urban, academic medical center model that removes the AA as a possibility for any rural anesthesia jobs. There is no need for another anesthesia provider in Nebraska, especially one needing direct physical supervision.

Nebraskans would be better served to have all institutions implement institutional policies that reflect state statutes which allow the CRNAs to practice to the full extent of their license without supervision. The proposed AA model (anesthesiologist directly supervising the AA) is outdated and the second most costly model. In many settings where an Anesthesiologists practice, the independent CRNAs providers are supervised and not allowed to practice to their full scope of practice. This model only exacerbates the staffing shortage.

Nurse anesthetists have been providing safe, quality anesthesia care in Nebraska since the 1890's and state licensure for CRNAs was achieved in 1981. This role is an autonomous advanced practice nursing role present in 99% of the state's operating rooms. CRNAs are sole anesthesia providers in 100% of the Critical Access hospitals in Nebraska and provide the majority of rural anesthesia care in our state.

In the interest of patient safety, the Nebraska APRN Board opposes the introduction of yet another duplicative, provider role in the form of Anesthesiologist Assistant.

Sincerely,

Jenda Stauffer APRN-CNM
President
NE Advanced Practice Board of Nursing

Alice Kindschuh, DNP, APRN-CNS, CNE

Alice Kindschuh APRN-CNS
Vice-president
NE Advanced Practice Board of Nursing