NEBRASKA
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DEPT. OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Pete Ricketts, Governor

July 28, 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 Nursing voted in opposition to the proposed credentialing application of the Anesthesiology Assistant (AA) at their July 14, 2022, meeting. The Nursing Board's opposition centers around the concept of 'nurse substitution,' which is once again gaining momentum via the current catastrophic nursing shortage.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) have been providing high quality and safe anesthesia care in Nebraska since 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 rural state.

Introducing AAs to the state of Nebraska will have a detrimental effect 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 our institutional policies reflect our state statutes. Having all anesthesia providers giving anesthesia and avoiding doubling up providers by utilizing outdated models where independent providers are supervised and not allowed to practice to their full scope of practice only exacerbates the staffing shortage.

In the interest of quality care and patient safety, the Board of Nursing opposes the introduction of yet another duplicative, non-nurse role in the form of Anesthesiologist Assistant.

Sincerely,

Patti Motl

Patti Motl BSN,RN,CPN, CHEP, NHDP-BC
President, Nebraska Board of Nursing