August 23, 2022

Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services
Licensure Unit
Attn: Technical Review Committee Staff
PO Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

Attn: Technical Review Committee, Board of Health, and Dr. Anthone

My name is Marty Fattig and I am the CEO of Nemaha County Hospital in Auburn, Nebraska. I am writing to urge you to recommend against the licensing of Anesthesiology Assistants (AA) in Nebraska. It is vitally important to Nebraska's' rural hospitals to maintain healthcare services in our local communities. These facilities serve to stabilize trauma patients for transfer to a higher level of care, deliver babies, perform routine procedures and surgeries and provide lifesaving care during the pandemic. Rural hospitals are not only a lifeline for their patients, but an economic driver for the entire community.

Rural hospitals depend on CRNAs to provide anesthesia services in their facilities. These highly skilled healthcare professionals are valuable members of the healthcare team, providing care to complex patients and managing difficult situations as they practice independently. In fact, the Medicare program has recognized how important it is to have CRNAs on our healthcare team that they created a special method of paying for the services of these professionals.

Anesthesia Assistants can only work where they are directly supervised by an anesthesiologist. With the limited number of anesthesiologists in this state it is impossible for them to cover the need for anesthesia services in rural Nebraska and I am concerned that if AAs are licensed in this state that the number of CRNAs trained here will decline and that others will leave the state to practice elsewhere.

My comments are not about creating a turf war between anesthesia providers. They are about providing the highest quality of medical and surgical care to the greatest number of people in our state. It is my opinion that CRNAs fill this need.

Thanks for giving my comments your consideration. If you should have questions, please feel free to contact me.

Cordially,

Marty Fattig