August 25, 2022

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

As physicians and surgeons licensed in Nebraska, we share your commitment to building and maintaining a quality health system in Nebraska. We are writing to express concern regarding the proposed licensure of anesthesiologist assistants (AAs) in Nebraska. **We urge you to recommend against the licensure of AAs.**

Nebraska already licenses two types of anesthesia professionals—Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and physician anesthesiologists. Currently, CRNAs practicing in Nebraska safely deliver the vast majority of anesthesia for surgical, obstetrical, and emergency procedures to citizens across the state. CRNAs are especially important for ensuring patient access to care in rural and other medically underserved areas, enabling patients to receive safe, cost-effective healthcare services close to their homes rather than having to travel great distances for needed care.

AAs are not a desirable option for patients or for our Nebraska healthcare system. AAs must work under direct supervision, and that supervision may only come from a physician anesthesiologist. Therefore, AAs cannot work anywhere where there are no physician anesthesiologists present. In a predominantly rural state like Nebraska, that makes AAs a non-factor for alleviating patient access to care issues or for controlling healthcare costs.

Further, no peer-reviewed studies in scientific journals have been published regarding the quality of care or quality of outcomes involving AAs. The quality of care that AAs provide is unproven. If an AA's supervising anesthesiologist is not available for any reason (working off site, day off, etc.), the AA cannot provide anesthesia care. If emergencies occur simultaneously in different operating rooms, lapses in supervision would likely occur and anesthesia care could be impacted. There is nothing to demonstrate this would be safe or in the best interests of patients.

CRNAs are independently licensed professionals who provide a solution to access and cost-containment issues and have a proven track record of quality care and patient safety. CRNAs are essential to meeting the anesthesia needs of our healthcare system. However, if Anesthesiologist Assistants would be licensed in Nebraska, the number of CRNAs in our state would likely be reduced. While CRNA schools in our region currently are reporting increased class sizes, Nebraska programs project a *decrease* in CRNA graduation rates of greater than 40% if AAs are allowed to practice in the state.

In summary, we believe licensure of AAs would be bad for Nebraska because

- They do NOT improve patient safety;
- They do NOT reduce costs;
- They do NOT improve patient access to anesthesia services.

We urge you to recommend AGAINST licensure of Anethesiologist Assistants.

Sincerely,

Kevin Grosshans, MD
Orthopedic Surgery, OrthoNebraska

Richard Bruce Koefoot Jr, MD
Urological Associates Grand Island

Shawn Brandenberg, DO
Orthopedic Surgery, Columbus Community Hospital

Jeremy Albin, MD
General Surgery, Columbus Community Hospital

Myron Morse, MD
General Surgery, Columbus Community Hospital

Nicholas Wulf, DO, FACOG
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Columbus Women's Healthcare

Mark Goebel, M.D.
Orthopedic Surgery, OrthoNebraska

Joe Citta, MD
Family Medicine, Columbus Community Hospital

Larry Lee Baker, MD, DDS, PC
Oral, Maxillofacial, & Implant Surgery, Hastings

Tadd Delozier, MD
Nebraska Emergency Medicine, Bryan Health

Anthony Murante, MD
General Surgery, Nebraska Medicine/UNMC

Dustin Volkmer, MD
Orthopedic Surgery, Columbus Community Hospital

Kady Kiichler, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Columbus Women's Healthcare

Bria R Meyer, MD
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, Methodist Hospital

Alicia Mizner, MD
Hospitalist, Inpatient Physicians Associates Columbus

Michael H McGuire, MD
Orthopedic Surgery, Columbus Community Hospital

Hernan Hernandez, MD
Colon and Rectal Surgery, Methodist Hospital

Kayla Knauss, DO
Family Practice, Gothenburg Health

Evan Neeson, MD
Emergency Physicians of Eastern Nebraska

Tony Richa, MD
Surgical Oncology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Joshua Urban, M.D.
Orthopedic Surgery, OrthoNebraska

David Vogel, MD
Vascular Surgery, Advanced Vascular and Vein Center

Kristi Peterson, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Omaha

Martin Mizener, MD
Ophthalmology, Midwest Eye Care

Michael J McNamara, MD
General Surgery, CHI Health

Andrea Leischman-Barb, DO
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Omaha OB/GYN Associates

Brett Hill, MD
Urologic Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Daniel J. Growney, MD
General Surgery, York Surgical Associates, PC

Sandra Bresnahan, MD
Family Medicine, Lexington Regional Health Center

James D Bertus, MD
Anesthesiology, Fountain Point Medical Community

Alex Lesiak, MD
Orthopedic Surgery, OrthoNebraska

Jason LaTowsky, M.D.
General Surgery, Regional West Medical Center

Tim Friedlein, MD
Orthopedic Surgery, Regional West Medical Center

Rommie Hughes, MD
General Surgery, Regional West Health Systems

Nathan F. E. Ullrich, MD
Urologic Surgery, Regional West Health Systems

Anton Simorov, MD
General Surgery, Faith Regional Health Services

Dorisa Polk, MD
Chief of Staff; Obstetrics & Gynecology, Regional West Health Systems

David Keleny, MD
General Surgery, Faith Regional Health Services

Jacob A. Weisen, MD
General Surgery, Greater Plains Health

Barbara Welch, MD
Anesthesiology, Mary Lanning

Gary Lehn, DDS
Pediatrict Dentistry, Pediatric Dental Specialists of Greater Nebraska