

August 25, 2022

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

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 Anesthesiologist Assistants.

Sincerely,

Matthew A. Mormino, MD
Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Heidi Hon, MD
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Michael Woodbury, DO
Chief of Surgery, Faith Regional Health Services

Alicia McCabe, MD
Hospital Medicine, Faith Regional Physician Services

Matt Felber, MD
Primary Care, Pender Community Hospital

Matthew Timm, M.D.
Primary Care, Pender Community Hospital

Cole Reha, M.D.
Primary Care, Pender Community Hospital

Guy Schropp, M.D., MBA
Obstetrics & Gynecology, CHI Health Clinics

Kirk Hutton, MD
OrthoNebraska

Jordan Lacy, MD
Neurosurgery, MD West One

Don B Rhoden, MD
Anesthesiology, Envision Health Services

Laurence "Larry" Raynor, MD
Anesthesiology, CHI Health Clinics

Jared Rickert, DO
Orthopedic Surgery, Faith Regional Orthopedics

Michelle Pittman, MD
Trauma Critical Care Surgery, Faith Regional Health Services

Christopher Gartin, M.D.
General Surgery, Methodist Fremont

Zackary B. Gangwer, DPM, FACFAS
Podiatry, Faith Regional Physician Services

Fadi Rzouq, MD
Gastroenterology, Faith Regional Health Services

Kerrey Buser, MD
General Surgery, Lexington Regional Health Center

Rao Chundury, MD
Ophthalmology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Christopher Price, MD
Anesthesiology, Faith Regional Health Services

Gary D Volentine, MD
Gastroenterology, University of Nebraska Medical Center/Omaha VA

Jason Miller, MD
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

James Scott, MD
General Surgery, Nebraska Medical Center Bellevue

Valmont Desa, DDS, MD
Chief of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Abbey Fingeret MD
Surgical Oncology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Jessica Shank, MD
Surgical Oncology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Jason Raymond Bailey, DPM
Podiatry, Faith Regional Physician Services

Matthew Rivard, MD
Chief of Surgery, Omaha VA Medical Center

John R. Ohnoutka, M.D.
Anesthesiology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Sean McGarry, MD
Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Ronald Hollins, MD
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Alexander Sawatzke, MD
Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Matthew Teusink, MD
Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Scott Reynolds, MD
OrthoNebraska

Terry Huang, MD
Anesthesiology, Envision Healthcare-CUMC Bergan Mercy

Jordan L Ochs, MD
Orthopaedic Surgery, Faith Regional Health Services, Norfolk

Brent Hood, DO
Hastings Orthopedics and Sports Medicine

Chad LaGrange, MD
Chief of Urologic Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Thomas William Cohee, M.D.
Family Medicine, Franciscan Healthcare, West Point

Jacob Oran, MD
General Surgery, Columbus Community Hospital

Beau J Kildow, MD
Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Matthew A. Tao, MD
Orthopaedic Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Matthew Pieper, MD
Radiology, Columbus Community Hospital

Matthew Winkelbauer, MD
Family Practice Medicine, Avera Medical Group, O'Neill

Kathryn Hutchins, MD
Gastroenterology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Robert Prince, MD
Anesthesiology, Faith Regional Physician Services, Norfolk

Kent DiNucci, DPM
Podiatry, Ankle & Foot Clinic

Samantha Luer, DPM
Podiatry, Avera St. Anthony's

Oluyemi Akin-Olugbade, MD
Urology, Faith Regional Physician Services

Grant F. Hutchins, MD
Gastroenterologist, Midwest Gastrointestinal Associates

Timothy Knudsen, MD
Otolaryngology, Nebraska Medicine

Timothy McCashland, MD
GI/Hepatology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

John Ray, MD
Orthopedic Spine Surgery, Lexington Regional Health Center

Kaitlin Hahn, MD
Family Medicine, Howard County Medical Center

Adam M Rensch, MD
Family Medicine, Howard County Medical Center

Angela Brennan, MD
Family Medicine, Howard County Medical Center

Brandon Menke, MD
Ophthalmology, Nebraska Methodist Hospital

Michael Hovey, MD
Chairman of Surgery, CHI Immanuel

Joseph Townley, MD
MD Eye Consultants

Eric D. Phillips, M.D.
Orthopedic Spine Surgery, Nebraska Spine and Pain Center

Shane Havens, MD
EyeConsultants, PC

Jayme Dowdall, MD
ENT, Laryngology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Joseph Kent, MD
Psychiatry, CHI Health

Peggy Jones, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology, CHI Health

Kyle Klammer, MD
Family Medicine, Lexington Regional Health Center

Aaron Pinion, DO
Internal Medicine, Allergy/Immunology, Kearney Regional Medical Center

Zachary Phipps, DO
Anesthesiology, CHI Health

Tyler Adam, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology, CHI Health

Edward V. Fehringers, M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgery, UNMC/Nebraska Medicine

Brian Boer, MD, PhD
Pulmonary, Critical Care, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Kai Yang, MD
Hand/Upper Extremity Surgery, Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, University of
Nebraska Medical Center

Arun Sharma, MD
Medical Director Behavioral Services, CHI Health

Jared Kramer, MD
Family Medicine, Howard County Medical Center

Jeff Carson, MD
General Surgery, Methodist Hospital

Kevin Pogreba, MD
Emergency Medicine, Bryan Health

Josh Miller, MD
Emergency Medicine, Bryan Health

Anne Fitzpatrick, MD
Ophthalmology, CHI Health

Anthony Oberle, MD
Urology Center, P.C.

Mark J Puccioni, MD
Neurosurgery, MD West One

Adam Strehle, DO
Family Medicine, Avera Medical Group Creighton

Scott Reetz, MD
General Surgery, Immanuel Medical Center

Brent Timperley, MD
Ophthalmology, Nebraska Medicine

Ben Grams, MD
General Surgery, Methodist Hospital

Andrea Kinnan, MD, FACOG
Obstetrics & Gynecology, CHI Health Clinic

Matt Dilisio, MD
OrthoNebraska

Randy Bain, DO
Family Medicine, Syracuse Area Health

Rhett J Eckmann, MD
Family Medicine, Franciscan Health, West Point

Matt McMahon, MD
Gastroenterology, Midwest Gastrointestinal Associates

Grant Saltzgaber, MD
Family Medicine, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Richard J Bean, MD
Family Medicine, Pawnee County Memorial Hospital

Patrick Moore, DPM
Podiatry, Moore Foot and Ankle Clinic, Kearney

Sayfe Jassim, MD
OrthoNebraska

Jesse Soucek, MD
Hospitalist, Methodist Hospital

Gangadasu Reddy, MBBS, MS, FACS
Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, CHI Health

Stanley Thomas, DO
Pulmonary Medicine, CHI Health

Brian Ward, MD
Gastroenterology, Midwest Gastrointestinal Associates

Sydney Joyce, DDS
South Pointe Dental

Travis Bailey, MD
Orthopedic Spine Surgery, Nebraska Spine and Pain

Jonathan Fuller, MD
Orthopedic Spine Surgery, Nebraska Spine and Pain

Brett Carranza, DDS
Kearney Pediatric Dentistry

Eric Carranza, DDS
Kearney Pediatric Dentistry

Andrew Christiansen, MD
Urologic Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Todd Pankratz, MD
Obstetrics and Gynecology, Mary Lanning Hospital

Erik Jacobson, DO
Hospital Medicine, CHI Health

David Hoefl, MD
Family Practice, CHI Health

Glen Gardner, MD
General Surgery, CHI Health

Susanne Sasse, MD
General Surgery, CHI Health

Lisa Murray, MD
Anesthesiology, CHI Health

Matt Johnson, MD
ENT Physicians of Kearney

Sandeep Mukherjee, MD
Hepatology, CHI Health

Jason Untrauer, MD, DDS
Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Katie Geelan-Hansen, MD
Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Nathan Pitts, MD
Anesthesiology, CHI Health

Benjamin Hall, MD
Gastroenterologist, Midwest Gastrointestinal Associates

Paige Harwell, MD
Breast Surgery, General Surgery, CHI Health

Michael Zimmerman, DPM
Podiatry, CHI Health

Robert M Taylor, MD, FACS
General Surgery, Nebraska Medicine/UNMC

Brant Luebbe, MD
General Surgery, Surgery Group of Grand Island

Christopher Seip, MD
General Surgery, Surgery Group of Grand Island

Kinzie Norris, MD
Breast Surgery, Faith Regional Physician Services

Kalyana Nandipati, MBBS
Director of Esophageal Center, CHI Health

Brittney Maloley-Lewis, DO
General Surgery, CHI Health Good Samaritan

John Fallick, MD
General Surgery Associates

Curtis Boeck, MD
Chief of Anesthesia, CHI Mercy Hospital

Glenn York, DPM
Benson Podiatry Assoc, PC

Adam Robinson, DMD, MD
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Jeffrey Schopp, MD
Orthopedic Surgery, Lexington Regional Health Center

Chris Deibert, MD
Urologic Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Christie Barnes, MD
ENT, Rhinology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Vikas Gulati, MD
Ophthalmology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Joel Gabriel, MD
Family Practice Medicine, Memorial Health Care Systems

Alex Hewlett, DO, MS
Gastroenterologist, Nebraska Medicine

Mary Kinyoun, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Jesse Loeffler, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Contemporary OBGYN

Brad Webb, DO
Orthopaedic Surgery, Nebraska Orthopaedic Center

Christopher Deans, MD
Orthopaedic Surgery, Nebraska Medicine/University of Nebraska Medical Center

John Hain, MD
Neurosurgery, Nebraska Spine + Pain Center

James Brian Gill, MD
Orthopedic Spine Surgery, Nebraska Spine + Pain Center

Stephanie Gustin, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Reproductive Endocrinology, Heartland Center for
Reproductive Medicine

Andrew Baumgatner, MD
Medical Director of Electroconvulsive Therapy, Nebraska Medicine

Travis John Hayes, MD
Anesthesiology, Medical Anesthesia Associates

Brad Winterstein, MD
General Surgery, Methodist Hospital

John Lammler, MD
Orthopedic Surgery, Faith Regional Orthopedics

Elizabeth Ann Weedin, DO, MS
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Reproductive Endocrinology, Heartland Center for
Reproductive Medicine

James Mahalek, MD
Orthopaedic Surgery, New West Sports Medicine

John Blecha, MD
ENT Physicians of Kearney

Gerald Keasling, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Methodist Fremont Health

Eric Bonness, MD
OrthoNebraska

Jon Buzzell, MD
Ortho Nebraska

Allison Benson, MD
Emergency Medicine, Bryan Health

Arif Nawaz, MD
Gastroenterology, CHI Health

Kenneth Carey, MD, DDS
Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, Heartland Oral Surgery

Matthew Sexton, MD
Primary Care, Lexington Regional Health Center

Jason S Herrmann, DDS
Prairie Meadows Dental

Garret Shaw, MD
Family Medicine, Gothenberg Health

Michael Simonson, MD
General Surgery, Community Hospital

Elizabeth Constance, MD
Obstetrics & Gynecology, Reproductive Endocrinology, Heartland Center for
Reproductive Medicine

Matthew J Magnino, MD
Anesthesiology, MD & M2 Anesthesia LLC

Tom White, MD
General Surgery, Methodist Hospital

Ivy Haskins, MD
General Surgery, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Paul Kolkman, MD, FACS
General Surgery, Methodist Hospital

Andrea Flamme, DO
Anesthesiology, Methodist Fremont

Josh H Wray, DPM
Podiatry, Great Plains Foot & Ankle Specialist

Zafar Sayed, MD
Head and Neck Surgical Oncology, University of Nebraska Medical Center

Matthew Day, MD
Hospital Medicine, CHI Health St. Francis

Brady Beecham, MD, MPH
Family Medicine, Lexington Regional Health Center

Bruce L Hanson, DDS
Plum Creek Dentistry, Lexington

Charles Eugene Rosipal, MD
Orthopedic Surgery, MD West One