

NH Medical and Anesthesiologist Societies Applaud NH Supreme Court's Decision to Ban the Misuse of Physician Titles

The New Hampshire Medical Society and Society of Anesthesiologists applaud the New Hampshire Supreme Court for upholding the New Hampshire Board of Medicine's decision that health care professionals using the term "anesthesiologist" must be licensed physicians and meet all of the requirements to practice medicine in the Granite State.

"This is an important court decision for patients in the delivery of anesthesia care across our state. Every patient deserves transparency regarding the professional backgrounds of the members of their anesthesia care team when undergoing a procedure or surgery," said NHMS President, Dr. Kenton Allen.

It's also an important win for team-based care in the Granite State. "In a small state like New Hampshire, working as a team to support and have trust during surgeries, in the delivery room or intensive care units is of paramount importance," added Dr. Stephen Surgenor, NHSA President. "Our focus has to remain on working together for patients to affect the best outcomes for them across various health care teams and settings."

The [court's decision to support the Board of Medicine's ruling](#) helps to protect patients and the public from misuse of commonly used and understood physician titles – such as cardiologists, psychiatrists and surgeons – and in this case the misuse of the term anesthesiologists.

The New Hampshire Supreme Court noted, "The record before the Board of Medicine included, among other things, studies, surveys, and licensure requirements highlighting similarities and differences between CRNAs and anesthesiologists and the public's understanding of that distinction. It is evident that those materials formed the foundation for the Board of Medicine's conclusion that anesthesiology is a subset of the practice of medicine and professionals who refer to themselves as 'anesthesiologists' must hold a license to practice medicine."

Both societies also wished to thank the medical profession for supporting the court challenge with amicus briefs, including the [American Medical Association](#) and [American Society of Anesthesiologists](#), as well as the [American Board of Medical Specialties](#) and [American Board of Anesthesiology](#). Eleven NH medical specialty societies also urged that the errant policy statement misusing medical titles be reversed.

Numerous health care organizations support this position, such as the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs, the accrediting agency for nurse anesthetists, defines "anesthesiologist" as a "doctor of medicine (MD) or doctor of osteopathy (DO) who has successfully completed an approved anesthesiology residency program" and the World Health Organization (WHO) views "anesthesiology as a medical practice" that should be directed and supervised by an anesthesiologist.

The [New Hampshire Society of Anesthesiologists](#) (NHSA) represents physicians who train for at least four years beyond the four years of medical school to be able to handle any anesthesia care crisis – emphasizing that it's all about the patient, because we have no other reason to exist.

Founded in 1791, by [Dr. Josiah Bartlett](#) – one of our country's founding fathers and the Granite State's first elected Governor – the [New Hampshire Medical Society](#) (NHMS) is dedicated and committed to advocating for patients, physicians, and the medical profession, as well as health-related rights, responsibilities and issues for the betterment of public health in the Granite State.

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