



February 25, 2019

New Hampshire Board of Nursing
Office of Professional Licensure and Certification
121 South Fruit Street
Concord, NH 03301

Dear NH Board of Nursing Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the NH Board of Nursing's recent action recognizing the terms "Nurse Anesthesiologist" and "Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiologist" as an optional and accurate descriptor.

The New Hampshire Association of Nurse Anesthetists (NHANA) represents nearly all of the CRNAs in our state. NHANA provides continuing education programs and political and public advocacy for the continued advancement of patient safety and practice excellence.

First and foremost, the NHANA would like to thank the Board of Nursing for recognizing the terms "Nurse Anesthesiologist" and "Certified Registered Nurse Anesthesiologist" at your November Board meeting. We recognize this is a relatively new term, therefore would like to provide some background information for your consideration.

The descriptor "Nurse Anesthesiologist" was created after a thorough legal and professional review, and after noting the continued confusion over the CRNA role. Our national association recently approved the term as an optional descriptor. This was due to CRNAs being confused for nursing assistants, aestheticians, or physicians. Discussed during this review, was that the term is not a misrepresentation because the words are accurate, and since other anesthesia professionals describe themselves by stating their profession followed by "anesthesiologist," such as dentist anesthesiologist and physician anesthesiologist. The intent was simple and transparent: to ensure patients know that CRNAs are *advanced practice nurses*, who are *experts in anesthesia care*.

Notably during this review, it was determined that "nurse anesthesiologist" is a legally separate term from "anesthesiologist" alone or "physician anesthesiologist". And it was found that there was no state with any prohibition on the term "nurse anesthesiologist", which has been described by some experts as commercial free speech. We should add that "nurse anesthesiologist" has been increasing in use not just in New Hampshire but across the country, so much so that Merriam-Webster made it a new entry into its dictionary in January 2019.

The optional "Nurse Anesthesiologist" descriptor does not

1. 1) Seek to expand or make any change to CRNA practice
2. 2) Make any comment about any other professions



Rather, it provides an accurate and transparent term to describe the CRNA's advanced practice nursing role, as well as our expertise in the provision of full-range and often autonomous anesthesia services. As it is well known, in New Hampshire CRNAs practice both with and without physician anesthesiologists, and their expert care provides great value to their patients and those communities, which are often rural and medically underserved areas.

Finally, I am attaching the position statement on this issue from the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists. This statement was revised in September 2018 and provides additional detail and background information for the Board's review.

Sincerely,

Sandra Keddy MSNA, CRNA and President of NHANA