



## MEMORANDUM IN OPPOSITION

*S987 (Senator Gaughran)/A 6986 (Assemblymember Bichotte Hermelyn)*

The New York State Association of Nurse Anesthetists (NYSANA), the professional association of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) practicing in the State, **STRONGLY OPPOSES** this bill.

This bill purports to codify the practice of nurse anesthesia, but the practice contemplated does not reflect how CRNAs practice today. This bill has the specific effect of physicians exerting unnecessary control over the practice of CRNAs by restricting our ability to practice to the full extent of our education and training. CRNAs are highly trained and educated providers of safe, quality and cost-effective anesthesia services. Anesthesia administration has been a proper nursing function in practice and law for over 100 years.

This bill would unnecessarily restrict the practice of CRNAs, for example, by allowing them to practice only in the presence of an anesthesiologist (MDA) or the operating physician, dentist, oral surgeon or podiatrist, who is personally participating. This requirement does not reflect recognized standards of anesthesia practice and ignores the trend in other states that are removing all supervision standards for CRNAs.

In fact, this requirement also ignores the experience of New York over the past year during the COVID-19 pandemic, when all supervision requirements for CRNAs were removed by executive order. This experience shows that there was no harm to patient care or experience by removing the supervision requirements. Passing legislation that ignores this experience, and imposes stricter burdens of supervision than exist under current law, is misguided and does not properly recognize the role of CRNAs in the administration of anesthesia care.

The existing requirements for masters and doctorate level education; clinical experience for all categories of patients, procedures and settings requiring anesthesia services; and national certification examination as a prerequisite for entry into practice and re-certification of CRNAs have all resulted in the high quality, professional standard of care exhibited by CRNAs since before the turn of the 20th century. CRNAs administer over 65% of the anesthetics given to patients each year and are the sole providers of anesthesia care in more than 90% of rural hospitals.

The practice of CRNAs needs to be preserved on behalf of rural hospitals and the underserved where there is currently a shortage of advanced practice nurses, including CRNAs. This bill creates a disincentive for CRNAs to practice to the full scope of their education and ability and to remain as members of the cadre of professionals required to provide healthcare to the citizens of this State.

Anesthesia is not the sole province of medicine. The administration of anesthetics by nurses antedates their general use by surgeons, both of which precede the physician specialty of anesthesiology. Anesthetics also are administered by dentists, oral surgeons, podiatrists, and veterinarians.

For these reasons, the New York State Association of Nurse Anesthetists strongly opposes this legislation.