



Memorandum in Support - S5435 (Senator Cooney)

Relates to certified registered nurse anesthetists

The New York State Association of Nurse Anesthetists (NYSANA) **strongly supports** S5435 (Cooney), which creates licensure with a scope of practice for certified registered nurse anesthetists. NYSANA is the statewide professional association representing the interests of over 1,900 Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and Student Registered Nurse Anesthetists (SRNAs) providing high-quality, safe and cost-effective anesthesia care to residents across New York State.

Currently in New York, CRNA practice is not codified in law. Instead, the scope of practice for CRNAs is defined through educational requirements and Health Department regulations. This legislation would create a scope of practice for CRNAs, allowing a CRNA to obtain a license, and practice to the full extent of their education and training. Oversight of the license will be under the NY State Education Department Office of Professions, as with all other nursing specialties.

CRNAs have been providing anesthesia care to patients for more than 150 years. Anesthesia is a recognized area of specialty in medicine and nursing. Regardless of whether the educational background is in nursing or medicine, all anesthesia providers provide anesthesia to facilitate diagnostic, therapeutic and surgical procedures. Nurse anesthesia is the nation's oldest advanced practice nursing specialty, dating back to the Civil War.

Anesthesia is safer today than at any other time. Current data demonstrates there is *no* significant difference in patient outcomes based on different types of anesthesia providers. Studies show the provision of anesthesia with a CRNA-only model costs hospitals significantly less than any other model utilized. Furthermore, the value and need for CRNAs was highlighted at a new level during the COVID-19 pandemic when CRNAs stepped into key leadership roles in treating COVID-19 patients. Just a few of the ways CRNAs helped was by educating nursing staff on advanced critical care skills, organizing COVID-19 airway teams, functioning as advanced practice registered nurses in the ICU and standardizing airway management and procedures. CRNAs rose to the challenge in ways that show their value, and the need for New York to finally adopt a defined scope of practice for the profession is upon us.

Unfortunately, New York is one of only two states that do not fully recognize CRNA practice. The time has come for New York to grant full recognition of CRNAs, which will lead to greater access to high quality care and help resolve problems that question liability, supervision and authority to administer anesthesia.

This legislation is based on the model used in the Nurse Practitioner Modernization Act of 2015. For newly graduated CRNAs with less than 3,600 hours experience, they will work

under a written practice agreement with a licensed physician. For experienced CRNAs with over 3,600 hours of experience, there will be a collaborative relationship with a licensed physician. Given that all supervision requirements have been waived by executive order during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a years' worth of data proves that there were no negative patient outcomes as the result of supervision removal, we believe we are well past time for this legislation to be adopted.

For these reasons, NYSANA **strongly supports** S5435 (Cooney), which creates a scope of practice for certified registered nurse anesthetists, and urges its swift passage.