CERTIFIED REGISTERED NURSE ANESTHETISTS FACT SHEET

The Kansas Association of Nurse Anesthetists (KANA) is a nonprofit association whose purpose is to advance the profession of nurse anesthesia, enhance the art and science of anesthesiology, and facilitate the provision of accessible, affordable, high quality care. Membership is limited to Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNA) and student registered nurse anesthetists (SRNA) who are members of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA).

CRNAs are advanced practice registered nurses (APRN) granted by the Kansas Board of Nursing Certification, and as a nurse anesthetist through the National Board on Certification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA). CRNAs must hold a current state license as a registered nurse, graduate from an approved masters or doctorate level education program, successfully complete the certification examination, and comply with continuing education requirements for recertification.

Nurses were the first professional group to specialize in and provide anesthesia services in the United States (U.S.) in the 1880s. From that time to present, nurse anesthetists have administered the majority of all anesthetics in all settings nationwide. Nurse anesthetists carried the major burden of military anesthesia services for the U.S. during every armed conflict of the 20th Century. During World War I and II, they trained other nurses and physicians from multiple countries as anesthetists. In fact, it was not until after World War II that sizable numbers of physicians entered the field. CRNAs practice in every setting in which anesthesia is delivered: traditional hospital surgical suites and obstetrical delivery rooms; critical access hospitals; ambulatory surgical centers; the offices of dentists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, plastic surgeons, and pain management specialists; and U.S. military, Public Health Services, and Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare facilities.

Today, some 68,000 CRNAs are practicing in all states throughout the U.S. There are approximately 1,000 CRNAs actively practicing in Kansas, making up more than 80% of all anesthesia providers in the state.

CRNAs are the primary providers of anesthesia services to America's rural population. In Kansas, more than 80% of the hospitals providing surgical services rely solely on nurse anesthetists for these medically underserved areas to offer obstetrical, surgical, pain management, and trauma stabilization services.

CRNAs provide anesthesia and pain control in a variety of settings. **They may practice independently, or they may work with anesthesiologists or with other physicians** such as surgeons, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, dentists, plastic surgeons and pain management specialists. The language "supervised" and "anesthesiologist" is not included in the Kansas Registered Nurse Anesthetist statues.

In 2001, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) changed the federal physician supervision rule for nurse anesthetists to allow state governors to opt out of this facility reimbursement requirement (which applies to hospitals and ambulatory surgical centers) by meeting three criteria: 1) consult the state boards of medicine and nursing about issues related to access to and the quality of anesthesia services in the state, 2) determine that opting out is consistent with state law, and 3) determine that opting out is in the best interests of the state's citizens. **In 2003, Kansas opted out of the supervision requirement and defer to state law on the oversight of CRNAs.**