



 Outlook

[External] CRNA Proposed Rulemaking

From Heather towers <hbelltowers@gmail.com>
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To ST, RegulatoryCounsel <RA-STRegulatoryCounsel@pa.gov>

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in response to the State Board of Nursing's proposed rulemaking, 16A-5145. This rulemaking finally recognizes and licenses certified registered nurse anesthetists, CRNAs, as intended under Act 60 of 2021. The rulemaking solidifies the scope of practice for CRNAs to administer anesthesia in cooperation with and under the overall direction of licensed physicians, podiatrists, and dentists, while setting licensing fees and certification standards.

I began my career as a registered nurse in 1995. I worked in the state of VA for 3 years. I began working on a surgical floor then made the decision to transfer to the ICU so I could advance my profession by meeting the necessary training requirements to become a Certified nurse anesthetist. Because the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has over 15 highly rated nurse anesthesia programs, I made the decision to come to PA to attend graduate school. Following graduation, I decided to stay in PA and have been working here as a CRNA for the last 24 1/2 years. During that time, I have worked in many settings. I have worked in the care team model in cooperation with anesthesiologists, as well as, independently in cooperation with surgeons, dentists and podiatrists. In 2017, I received my doctorate in nurse anesthesia practice.

Although I have worked in PA as a CRNA, during COVID, I was unable to assist in other states as a CRNA, where my skills were invaluable, because we were not recognized as an advanced practice provider. More recently, I have made the decision to continue my skills and obtain my acute pain certification. The school is located in TN, where APRNs have their own license. Because PA has not formally recognized CRNAs as APRNs, I have had to submit multiple documents, including but not limited to ACT 60, to demonstrate I am in fact an APRN.

CRNAs are in fact advanced providers. We have a bachelor's degree, then must have several years experience as a registered nurse, with intensive care experience, and now obtain a doctorate in order to sit for our national board certification exam. Our rigorous training and commitment to care has proven that we are safe, cost effective providers, who can work as the main anesthesia provider not only in rural areas but in the military setting as well.

I love being a CRNA and I am extremely proud to call myself an advanced provider. I encourage you to support the rulemaking to make it official, in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I appreciate the time that has gone into making this official. I am open to receiving emails or phone calls if you have any questions regarding our profession. I would be happy to be available.

Sincerely,
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