



October 31, 2013

Hon. Robert Petzel, MD
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of the Under Secretary for Health 810
Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Re: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Recognition of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses as Licensed Independent Practitioners in the Veterans Health Administration's Nursing Handbook

Dear Dr. Petzel:

The American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA), the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs (COA), and the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) commend the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and Secretary Shinseki for their recognition of advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) as Licensed Independent Practitioners (LIPs) in the Veterans Health Administration's (VHA's) Nursing Handbook.

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) are APRNs and anesthesia professionals who safely administer more than 34 million anesthetics to patients each year in the United States. Nurse anesthetists have been delivering high-quality healthcare to our nation's service men and women since the Civil War. Members of our profession are fully committed to the mission of the VHA, where some 700 nurse anesthetists proudly provide anesthesia and pain management care in service to our Veterans. Many of those VHA nurse anesthetists are themselves Veterans of our U.S. Armed Forces, or were registered nurses in VHA healthcare facilities before undertaking their anesthesia education.


The VHA's recommendation to acknowledge APRNs as independent practitioners will enable nurse anesthetists to practice to the full extent of the education and training we receive, which in turn will help ensure an adequate supply of nurse anesthetists are available to care for the military and Veteran populations.

Respectfully submitted,

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF NURSE ANESTHETISTS


By: Dennis C. Bless, CRNA, MS
Title: AANA President

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COUNCIL ON ACCREDITATION OF NURSE ANESTHESIA EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS


By: Kathleen A. Cook, MS, CRNA
Title: COA Chair

Signature: 

Date: October 31, 2013

NATIONAL BOARD OF CERTIFICATION AND RECERTIFICATION FOR NURSE ANESTHETISTS

By: Charles Vacchiano, PhD, CRNA
Title: NBCRNA President

Signature: 

Date: October 31, 2013