

February 13, 2019

Chairman of the Health Committee:

As a Family Practice physician practicing in Larned, KS, I am writing this letter in support of allowing the practice of Certified Anesthesiologists Assistants (CAAs) in Kansas. I believe that CAAs are highly qualified healthcare professionals that provide anesthesia care for surgery and other interventions in an equivalent manner as nurse anesthetists (CRNAs). CAAs undergo the same rigorous premedical classes that are required to get into medical school in the form of a bachelor's degree, and then complete an additional 2-2.5 year program that is analogous to CRNA training in order to practice anesthesia. The most significant difference between CRNAs and CAAs is that CAAs must practice under the anesthesia care team model. Under this model, a CAA must always work under the medical direction of a physician anesthesiologist.

Many states where CAAs are already able to practice (Missouri, Oklahoma, Colorado, etc.) use CAAs and CRNAs interchangeably, and see no difference in their productivity, quality or skills. The ability to have CAAs as well as CRNAs available to help provide efficacious and safe anesthesia is important, not only to the state of Kansas, but to the entire medical system.

With the expansion of the CAA profession into Kansas, it would increase the workforce in the anesthesia field, potentially decrease the cost of healthcare for the state, and allow residents of Kansas to actually work in the state where they reside as opposed to having to commute to other states to work in their chosen field. CAAs are highly specialized members of the anesthesia care team that can immediately contribute to the significant healthcare deficit in Kansas.

I appreciate your time and attention in considering this important issue. I respectfully request that you approve the credentialing application of CAAs, moving us closer to allowing them to practice and helping to address the critical shortage of anesthesia care professionals in our great state.

Sincerely,



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