



## **Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) at a Glance**

CRNAs are the “backbone” of anesthesia care in Iowa. In 88 of Iowa’s 117 community hospitals, CRNAs are the *sole* providers of anesthesia care.

Under Iowa law, CRNAs are Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioners (ARNPs) who practice independently and have the authority to prescribe medications used before, during, and after the administration of anesthesia. CRNAs work in collaboration with surgeons, dentists, podiatrists, and other qualified healthcare professionals in every setting where anesthesia is delivered.

CRNAs have been providing chronic pain management services in Iowa for more than 20 years and are the *sole* providers of chronic pain management in more than 50 percent of Iowa’s community hospitals.

The Iowa Association of Nurse Anesthetists (IANA) represents more than 265 CRNAs who practice in Iowa.

In 2001, Iowa became the first state to “opt out” of the federal physician supervision rule for nurse anesthetists. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) changed the federal rule 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 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. To date, 16 states have followed Iowa’s lead. **(See CFR § 482.52)**

Issues of interest to the IANA include:

- Attempts to limit CRNA scope of practice.
- Preservation of the 14-year-old opt-out from physician supervision of CRNAs.
- Efforts to prevent CRNAs from contracting with medical providers or obtaining hospital privileges.
- Reimbursement rates for CRNA services.
- Licensing of advanced registered nurse practitioners.
- Efforts to prohibit or limit CRNA use of fluoroscopy and provision of pain management services.

Education and experience required to become a CRNA include:

- A Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) or other appropriate baccalaureate degree.
- A current license as a registered nurse.
- At least one year of experience as a registered nurse in a critical care setting.
- Graduation with a minimum of a master’s degree from an accredited 24-36 month nurse anesthesia educational program including extensive clinical training.
- Pass the national certification examination following graduation.

To be recertified, CRNAs must obtain at least 40 hours of approved continuing education every two years.

Nationally, CRNAs safely provide *more than 33 million anesthetics* to patients each year in the United States, according to the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists 2011 Practice Profile Survey. A 1999 report from the Institute of Medicine showed that anesthesia care is nearly 50 times safer than it was in the early 1980s, and numerous outcomes studies have demonstrated that there is no difference in the quality of care provided by CRNAs and their physician counterparts.

If you have any questions, please contact:

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