



Massachusetts Patients now Have Increased Access to Anesthesia Care

AANA Applauds Gov. Healey's Action to Reduce Anesthesia Care Barriers

June 4, 2024

Rosemont, Ill. (AANA)—Massachusetts patients now have increased access to safe, affordable anesthesia care. The state is the latest to opt out from federal regulations that require physician supervision of Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs), also known as nurse anesthesiologists or nurse anesthetists.

In a letter to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey (D) wrote, “I am exercising the option to remove the requirement that [CRNAs] be supervised by a physician. I believe this exemption is in the best interest of the citizens of Massachusetts regarding access to and the quality of anesthesia services in the state.”

The American Association of Nurse Anesthesiology (AANA) reports that the governors of 25 states and Guam have exercised such exemptions for either full or partial opt-out.

“Through her action, Gov. Healey ensures Massachusetts’ patients have access to value-based, high-quality care and that the Commonwealth recognizes that CRNAs are qualified to make autonomous decisions regarding all aspects of anesthesia care based on their education, licensure, and certification,” said Glenn Colassi, MS, CRNA, president of Massachusetts Association of Nurse Anesthetists (MANA). “It also allows healthcare facilities to optimize healthcare teams by removing barriers and allowing to maximize their workforce, leading not only to more access of care by more economical care models.”

CRNAs provide all aspects of superior anesthesia throughout Massachusetts. Nationally, CRNAs safely administer more than 50 million anesthetics to patients each year working in every setting in which anesthesia is delivered. CRNAs are the primary providers of anesthesia care in rural settings, enabling facilities in these medically



underserved areas to offer obstetrical, surgical, pain management, and trauma stabilization services. CRNAs have full practice authority in the Army, Navy, and Air Force and are the predominant provider of anesthesia on forward surgical teams and in combat support hospitals.

As advanced practice registered nurses, CRNAs are members of one of the most trusted professions according to Gallup.