



Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists

Written Testimony of
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Chair, Government Relations Committee
Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists

Raised Senate Bill No. 67
An Act Concerning the Authority and Responsibilities of Advanced Practice Nurses

February 16, 2016
Connecticut General Assembly's Public Health Committee

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, Senator Markley, Representative Srinivasan and the distinguished members of the Public Health Committee, my name is Donna Sanchez, I am a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) and an Advanced Practice Registered Nurse (APRN). I am writing on behalf of the Connecticut Association of Nurse Anesthetists (CANA), in support of Raised Senate Bill No. 67, An Act Concerning the Authority and Responsibilities of Advanced Practice Nurses.

As advanced practice registered nurses, CRNAs practice with a high degree of autonomy and professional respect. Nurse anesthetists have been providing anesthesia care to patients in the United States for more than 150-years. According to a 1999 report from the Institute of Medicine, anesthesia care is nearly 50 times safer than it was in the early 1980s. Numerous outcome studies have demonstrated that there is no difference in the quality of care provided by CRNAs and their physician counterparts. Managed care plans recognize CRNAs for providing high-quality anesthesia care with reduced expense to patients and insurance companies. The cost-efficiency of CRNAs helps control escalating healthcare costs.

CRNAs practice in every setting in which anesthesia is delivered: traditional hospital surgical suites and obstetrical delivery rooms; critical access hospitals; ambulatory surgical centers; the offices of dentists, podiatrists, ophthalmologists, plastic surgeons and pain management specialists; and the U.S. military, Public Health Services and Department of Veterans Affairs healthcare facilities. Nurse anesthetists have been the main providers of anesthesia care to U.S. military personnel on the front lines since WWI. Nurses first provided anesthesia to wounded soldiers during the Civil War.

In recent years, the Connecticut General Assembly has done a great service to the people of Connecticut by lifting barriers to healthcare by allowing APRNs to provide care for Connecticut's residents to the fullest level of their education, training and licensure. That alone has provided Connecticut's residents greater access to healthcare but they need full access to care for their health in every stage of their life.

Our general statutes have numerous references where the only recognized qualified professional to certify a person in need of services or resources is a licensed physician. This restricts Connecticut resident's access to all aspects of care. Allowing APRNs to legally sign, certify and order all aspects of care removes this barrier. It not only allows for continuity of care, but also eliminates a repetitive, costly step in the process of getting Connecticut's people the services and care they need.

While the document before you is very lengthy, every aspect of this proposal is within the scope of practice for APRNs. Like all other licensed independent practitioners, each specialty of advanced practice nurses have unique experiences, and are well educated on the social, physical and psychological aspects within their practice environment. By adding Advanced Practice Nurses as an accepted primary care provider that has the legal authority to execute healthcare matters, we ensure that the providers are able to do right by their patients. We guarantee them the ability to promote, maintain and regain their healthcare without layers of complicated legal barriers.

Thank you for your time and for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of Raised Bill No. 67. Feel free to contact me if there are any questions and concerns regarding this matter.

Respectfully,
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