

AA Licensure Will Help Alleviate Shortage of Nurse Anesthetists In North Carolina

North Carolina is suffering from an acute shortage of nurse anesthetists. Having a sufficient supply of mid-level anesthesia providers is critical to meeting the growing demand for surgical services in this State.

The shortage of nurse anesthetists in North Carolina is well-documented – by nurse anesthetists themselves:

- A recent study funded by North Carolina nurse anesthesia schools found a significant shortage of nurse anesthetists to meet the growing demand for anesthesia services.¹ North Carolina hospitals reported a need for over 150 new nurse anesthetists a year, but our State's five nurse anesthesia schools are graduating only 95-100 nurses annually.
- This same study found that a disproportionate number of N.C. nurse anesthetists are expected to retire within the next decade.
- In a January 23, 2005 article in the *Winston-Salem Journal*, Barry Amerson (the chief nurse anesthetist of the Inpatient Operating Rooms at North Carolina Baptist Hospital) stated that a large number of nurse anesthetists are preparing to retire, creating "a big deficit in how many we can educate and the number that will retire."
- In 2002, the then-President of the North Carolina Association of Nurse Anesthetists, told the *Raleigh News & Observer* that manpower shortages were the greatest challenge facing her organization and that "[f]aced with a nurse anesthetist shortage, recruiting will continue to be a challenge."
- A 2002 article in the AANA Journal by three North Carolina nurse anesthesia educators stated that the current graduation rates of nurse anesthetists is "is far below the number of CRNAs currently needed." These nurse anesthetists went on to predict that "**unless correction of CRNA shortages becomes [a] top priority . . . we should not be surprised if more anesthesiologist assistant programs open, and the use of these providers expands into more states.**"²

Support HB 1330: Authorize/Licensure Anesthesiologist Assistants

¹ Ouellette, Sandra M., CRNA, Med, FAAN, *The CRNA Workforce: Is there a Problem?*

² Ouellette, Bruton-Maree, Kohlenberg, *Expansion of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs: Where Are The Barriers?*