
TESTIMONY OF DR. DENISE WEISS, D.O.
HOUSE HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES COMMITTEE
WRITTEN PROPONENT REGARDING HB 2295
FEBRUARY 18, 2019

Dear Chairperson Landwehr and committee members:

I am submitting this letter to you regarding HB 2295 as I am unable to be present to speak at Monday's hearing. I am an anesthesiologist in Salina Ks and have been in practice since 2011. Prior to attending medical school to become an anesthesiologist I was a family nurse practitioner for 4 years. I was required to have nursing experience to become a nurse practitioner. I can tell you however that because my nursing background was only two years, I really did not benefit from it as a nurse practitioner. It helped me to be able to talk to patients and understand effects of medications and nursing treatments, but it certainly did not prepare me to critically think, diagnose, and treat patients. You will hear that certified registered nurse anesthetists (CRNAs) are superior to anesthesia assistants (AA's) because of their nursing background. CRNAs are trained to take care of patient's undergoing surgery and requiring anesthesia. Critical care nursing is very important but it is not a requirement to learn how to take care of someone undergoing anesthesia. As a nurse you follow protocols and orders. You do not have to understand the physiology behind what you are doing. You do not have to make split section decisions, or decide how to treat a patient.

AA's are the equivalent of a Physician Assistant which we are all familiar with. The difference is they only practice anesthesia. They are always supervised by an anesthesiologist. This is a requirement. Anesthesiologists are there for the crucial portions of the anesthesia care and are always immediately available.

The arguments that you will hear from CRNAs are the same arguments that NPs used against PA's for years. However, now NP's and PA's work together everyday in all types of health care settings and none of the fears that were discussed have come to light.

The other reason I have been active in the pursuit of licensure for AA's in Kansas is that since I have been in practice in Salina, we have never been able to be fully staffed. We are constantly hiring locum tenens CRNAs and physicians. There are simply not enough

CRNAs and anesthesiologists to fill the needs of hospitals and surgery centers. AA's will not affect rural Kansas because AA's have to be supervised. Unfortunately, due to rural pass through rural hospitals are incentivized to hire CRNAs and not anesthesiologists therefore AA's are not a threat to rural Kansas. They will only practice in areas where there are anesthesiologists to supervise them. I appreciate your time reading my testimony and I am happy to visit with you about this at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Dr. Denise Weiss, D.O.