



School of Medicine  
Graduate Health Professions in Medicine

February 18, 2019

Dear Chairwoman Lanwehr and members Health and Human Services Committee:

I am writing in support House Bill 2295, licensure of Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants in the great state of Kansas. University of Missouri-Kansas City (UMKC) is Kansas City's University. It is our mission to serve the communities of Missouri and Kansas. I have been a faculty member at the UMKC School of Medicine for 24 years and have extensive experience with successful education and training of health care professionals including Anesthesiologist Assistants, Physicians, and Physician Assistants. As the Assistant Dean for Graduate Studies, I have expertise with the accreditation expectations for health professions degree programs. I am writing to provide reassurance regarding the content and quality of the AA education and training programs.

AA programs are accredited by the Commission for Accreditation of Allied Health Educational Programs (CAAHEP). The Accreditation Review Committee for the Anesthesiologist Assistant (ARC-AA) serves under CAAHEP to promote and advance the quality of AA educational programs. Two key profession, AAs and Anesthesiologists, work closely to establish the standards and guidelines required of AA programs for accreditation. The AA standards and guidelines are rigorous and comparable to those of other health professions including medicine and physician assistant. AA programs undergo an extensive and ongoing review process to prove compliance with such standards.

The standards and guidelines for accreditation of AA programs are suffused with quality standards. The standards address critical curriculum content, learning domains, competencies, and clinical hours, and additionally require quality components. Quality is addressed at all levels from sponsorship to curriculum. Programs must be affiliated with a qualified sponsor and be able to demonstrate provision of adequate support to deliver a quality AA degree program. The AA program leadership and faculty must possess appropriate qualifications. Programs must engage in ongoing evidence based quality improvement and program evaluation. Programs develop their own goals and outcome measures in addition to suing ARC-AA required quality measures. Samples of quality outcomes include certification exam performance, job placement, and post-graduation surveys from graduates and employers regarding preparedness for practice (knowledge, clinical proficiency, inter-professional practice).

Accredited programs provide a professional master's degree with the commensurate admissions, curriculum, and graduation requirements. The admission prerequisite coursework and eligibility criteria (e.g., MCAT) are comparable to those of pre-medicine. At UMKC, many of the faculty teaching medical student level courses also teach in the AA curriculum. The content is of the same rigor, yet appropriately modified to provide the necessary breadth and depth to academically and clinically prepare graduates for practice in the anesthesia care team.

In summary, there is evidence that CAAs are qualified academically and clinically prepared professionals to work in the anesthesia care team. The addition of this profession to the Kansas health care workforce will benefit the health of your community.

Sincerely,

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