



March 26, 2020

The Honorable Eric Holcomb
Governor, State of Indiana
Indiana State House
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Dear Governor Holcomb:

Thank you for your leadership in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. The Indiana Association of Nurse Anesthetists (INANA) represents more than 568 nurse anesthetists, including Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) and student registered nurse anesthetists, and our members are committed to addressing this pandemic. The COVID-19 outbreak continues to put a strain on healthcare facilities in Indiana. Therefore, it is important for our state to optimize its healthcare workforce. At this critical time, it is essential for Indiana to waive unnecessary restrictions to scope of practice and allow all Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), including CRNAs, to work to the full extent of their education and national certification. The Indiana Association of Nurse Anesthetists strongly encourages your administration to take these actions immediately.

On March 24, 2020, the National Governors Association issued guidance to states regarding Strategies for Health Care Workforce and Facility Capacity. The guidance specifically emphasized that Governors interested in increasing the capacity of their health care workforce should consider allowing providers to practice at the top of their license. This guidance is an important step in addressing healthcare workforce issues that are likely to result from the COVID-19 crisis. The guidance is also consistent with the March 24, 2020, letter sent by Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar to all Governors encouraging them to remove or relax scope of practice barriers to expand the capacity of their states' current health care workforce to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Secretary's recommendations include allowing health professionals to practice across state lines and suspending restrictive supervisory and collaborative scope of practice requirements. Removing these burdensome restrictions on CRNAs and other healthcare professionals is the right policy at this critical juncture and is desperately needed to meet the growing demands on our healthcare delivery system. Facilities need maximum flexibility in utilizing CRNAs and other APRNs to staff ICUs, ORs, critical care and other units as patient care requires. CRNAs can play an important role in providing life-saving critical care management for patients impacted by the COVID-19 virus in their APRN role. Limits on CRNA practice are not based on any data or research, and CRNAs already safely practice beyond these limits in many states. CRNAs are prepared to practice autonomously and are qualified to make independent judgments based on their education, licensure and certification. We also encourage your administration to expand emergency health care workforce declaration to authorize use of out-of-state nursing licensees, and to facilitate use of in-state inactive licensees and retired healthcare providers.

Many states, such as Maine, Maryland, New York and Tennessee, have already suspended restrictive scope of practice requirements for Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists. We encourage your administration to take similar steps to significantly improve the ability of our state to respond to increased healthcare needs of its citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic.

During this time of national crisis, we need all available resources to address the healthcare needs in our state. We ask that your administration continue to work on finding solutions that allow all APRNs to contribute to the full extent of their licensure and education. There will be tremendous demands on the healthcare system in our state going forward. CRNAs are uniquely qualified to help solve healthcare problems as this crisis evolves but face restrictive regulatory barriers that prevent us from practicing at the highest level of our education and training. This is an all-hands-on-deck situation and CRNAs, along with our Advanced Practice Registered Nursing (APRN) colleagues, are on the frontlines of care, saving lives. **We ask that during this emergency, you waive the regulatory barriers for all APRNs, including CRNAs, and enable all APRNs to practice without physician supervision and protocols, to the full extent of their education and training.**

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (574) 358-1795 or glouck@sf.edu if you have any questions or require further information.

We thank you for your leadership and stand ready to help address healthcare needs of our state during this pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Greg Louck". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "L".

Greg Louck, MS, CRNA

President, Indiana Association of Nurse Anesthetists