

**HB 224 – PROPONENT TESTIMONY**  
**Ohio House Health Committee**  
**Sonya Moore CRNA, DNP**

Good afternoon Chairman Merrin, Vice Chair Manning, Ranking Member Boyd, and members of the House Health Committee.

My name is Sonya Moore. I am a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist, or CRNA, and I am also the director of one of the seven nurse anesthesia educational programs in Ohio. As a program director, I coordinate a complete program of study for critical care registered nurses to become CRNAs. I would like to provide some information about the educational preparation of CRNAs. In order to become a CRNA, an individual must meet, at a minimum, these requirements:

- They must be a licensed, baccalaureate prepared, Registered Nurse
- They must have at least one year of experience working in a critical care environment, managing unstable patients who need continuous life-sustaining treatments, invasive interventions, and constant monitoring. While one year is the minimum level, most applicants have 3 or more years of experience in this type of environment.
- They must complete an accredited graduate program of study in anesthesia that provides a minimum of a Master's degree, and by 2022, must award a doctoral degree for entry level into practice.
- They must pass a national certification examination within two years of graduation. CRNAs cannot practice unless they are board-certified.

Overall, it takes a minimum of seven years of education and experience to become a Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist: four years of undergraduate education, at least one year of critical care nursing experience, and two years of graduate coursework in nurse anesthesia.

I understand that during Sponsor testimony last week there was a question regarding the doctoral degree requirement for CRNAs and I would like to respond for those who may be confused. Nurse anesthesia programs continue to transition to awarding doctoral degrees. As of December 21, 2018, 85 of 146 nurse anesthesia programs in the country are approved by the Council on Accreditation of Nurse Anesthesia Educational Programs to offer entry-level doctoral degrees and 25 programs are approved to offer post-master's doctoral degree completion programs. Currently 36 programs remain to be approved to award doctoral degrees to meet the requirement that all students matriculated into entry level nurse anesthesia programs on January 1,

2022, and thereafter be enrolled in a doctoral program. The attached graph from COA illustrates this transition.

I would also like to address the content and quality of nurse anesthesia education. I serve as a board member for the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA). I'm currently the AANA board's liaison to the National Board of Certification and Recertification for Nurse Anesthetists (NBCRNA) which is dedicated to promoting patient safety by enhancing provider quality in the field of nurse anesthesia. The NBCRNA develops and implements credentialing programs that support lifelong learning among nurse anesthetists. The NBCRNA ensures the standards for nurse anesthesia education that are rigorous, specific, and complete demonstrate that all graduates meet the same level of competency. In order to become a CRNA, the educational program must ensure that every single student is competent in all aspects of anesthesia care delivery. This includes:

- Preoperative preparation and evaluation;
- Identification of anesthetic risk, and ways to minimize that risk to the patient;
- Development and initiation of a patient-specific plan of care which includes selecting, ordering, and administering medications;
- Postoperative care management;
- Management of complications or side effects related to anesthesia
- Clinical support functions: E.g., epidurals, nerve blocks, breathing tubes

The educational program teaches students how to provide anesthesia care for patients of all ages, from newborns to the elderly. It teaches them how to provide anesthesia care for patients of all states of health, from completely healthy to critically ill. It teaches them how to provide anesthesia care for all types of surgical procedures, such as complex neurosurgery, open heart surgery, obstetric procedures, and transplants. In summary, their training is rigorous, thorough, and comprehensive.

CRNAs also undergo a demanding recertification process. After passing the initial board certification exam, CRNAs must recertify every four years. This requires completion of four core educational modules and one hundred education credits. Additionally, every eight years, the CRNA must pass a board recertification exam. This process ensures that CRNAs stay current with new practice techniques and are able to demonstrate competency in their practice.

Opponents of this legislation will state certain functions of the proposed scope of practice in HB 224 should only be performed by a physician; for example, placing orders. Their rationale is that physicians have more education than do nurse

anesthetists. While our education is different, it is not inferior. This is not another pathway to become a physician; it is simply another pathway to become an anesthesia provider. CRNAs and physicians are held to the same standard of anesthesia care. Anesthesia is given the same way, regardless of whether it is provided by a CRNA or a physician. In fact, study after study has demonstrated no difference in outcomes based on who provides the anesthesia care.

HB 224 will not expand the scope of a CRNA; it will simply match the statute to their education level. With the rapidly increasing cost of delivering healthcare, it is imperative that we strive to be efficient and effective wherever we can. This is an excellent opportunity to offer a tremendous value to Ohio's patients. By allowing CRNAs to practice to the scope to which they were trained, healthcare facilities have the flexibility to maximize the value of these highly educated practitioners. This is good for patients, and this is good for the strained healthcare facilities in Ohio and I ask for your support of HB 224.

Thank you for the opportunity to present to the Committee today. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

## Nurse Anesthesia Programs Awarding Master's and Doctoral Degrees for Entry into Practice

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