



**Opponent Testimony Before the
Ohio House of Representatives Health Committee**

Gretchen Heringhaus, CAA

HB 191-5

November 14, 2018

Hello, my name is Gretchen Heringhaus and I am a practicing anesthesiologist here in Columbus. I am, however, not a CRNA but a Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant, or CAA. I work alongside CRNAs under the supervision of physician anesthesiologists within the Anesthesia Care Team model and have done so for the past 9 years. CAAs and CRNAs working together in the same ACT function similarly and are compensated identically commensurate with each provider's years of experience as an anesthesiologist. Please allow me to briefly tell you about CAAs.

Anesthesiologist Assistants have provided high quality anesthesia care as members of the Anesthesia Care Team in Ohio for nearly 50 years. The profession was created by anesthesiologists at University Hospital in Cleveland, OH and Emory University in Atlanta, GA in the late 1960s to address an anesthesia provider shortage. CAAs complete pre-medical course work and obtain a Bachelor's degree at a four-year university before beginning their two-year Master's degree training in anesthesia. CAAs are certified by the National Commission for the Certification of Anesthesiologist Assistants, or NCCAA, and in Ohio are licensed by the State Medical Board.

The Ohio Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants supports the Anesthesia Care Team because it is the safest way to provide anesthesia. We concur with the American Society of Anesthesiologists: All patients deserve the involvement of a physician anesthesiologist in their care. Anesthesiologists have the most training of any anesthesia provider and are uniquely equipped to handle complex problems that may arise in the operating room. The team approach utilizes the expertise and skills of each highly trained anesthesiologist but also incorporates the extensive education and skillset of an anesthesiologist into each anesthetic.

In the ACT model, patients receive a thorough evaluation from a physician prior to every surgery and the anesthesiologist is involved in the planning and implementation of every anesthetic. Also,

only the ACT ensures that a second provider – a physician anesthesiologist - is immediately available to assist in the event of an operating room emergency. Supervising anesthesiologists are also able to supervise multiple operating rooms at once. This is the great advantage of the team model; the ACT leverages the expertise of physician anesthesiologists so that two minds and two sets of hands trained in delivering safe anesthesia care to patients are available for every anesthetic: the physician anesthesiologist and the anesthetist (CAA or CRNA).

CRNAs are well-trained professionals and are essential to the Anesthesia Care Team in Ohio as well as nationwide. However, without question, the safest anesthetics for all patients are provided under the supervision of physician anesthesiologists. For this reason, I, along with the Ohio Academy of Anesthesiologist Assistants ask this committee to oppose the passage of House Bill 191.

Thank you.