



## Stakeholders Express Concern with Proposed VHA Nursing Handbook

A broad range of experts have expressed their concern with the “VHA Nursing Handbook,” a draft policy document that could compromise the safety of our nation’s Veterans receiving surgical anesthesia care within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). Removing team-based, physician-led anesthesia care is an ill-advised change that the VA’s Chiefs of Anesthesiology, Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs) and a variety of medical groups all oppose.



“[T]he abandonment of the care team model would be extremely disruptive to our services, leaving many of us with inappropriate staffing ratios which **would directly compromise patient safety and limit our ability to provide quality care to Veterans.** ... It is our belief that this situation represents a ‘Stop the Line’ moment.”

- 67 VA Chiefs of Anesthesiology



“AMVETS believes that the existing policies and system of anesthesia delivery in the VHA assures that safe, high quality anesthesia care is delivered to our Veterans.”

- AMVETS



“We find this proposed shift from the current guidelines **unnecessary and worrisome for our nation’s Veteran community.** ... we believe **it is in the best interest of our Veterans that the VHA continue to administer anesthesia under the current guidelines.**”

- Association of the U.S. Navy (AUSN)



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“Nurse training is not designed to prepare them for this, and the proposal is a very real threat to patient safety...**it is beyond reason that VA would enact this policy at the cost of Veterans’ health and safety, and without physician input.**”

*- National Association of VA Physicians and Dentists*



“The VHA system, recognizing the risky and complex nature of anesthesia, has a separate handbook pertaining solely to the delivery of anesthesia... **By requiring nurse anesthetists to practice without physician or dentist support, supervision or oversight, the proposed language, would result in conflicting information between the Nursing Handbook and the Anesthesia Handbook.**”

*- American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS)*



“We are concerned that some of the changes proposed may significantly undermine the delivery of care within the VHA while disregarding the states’ role in regulating the health and safety of their residents in the delivery of health care services. **The draft VHA Nursing Handbook effectively eliminates physician-led, team-based care** within the VHA system.”

*- Societies of the American Medical Association; 66 organizations representing the nation’s physicians*