



May 26, 2021

Steven M. Sertich, CRNA, MAE, JD  
President  
American Association of Nurse Anesthetists  
222 South Prospect Avenue  
Park Ridge, Illinois 60068-4001

Dear Mr. Sertich:

On behalf of American Society of Anesthesiologists (ASA), I write to express our serious concerns about the decision of the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) to adopt and encourage nurse anesthetists to refer to themselves as “nurse anesthesiologists.” Use of the term “nurse anesthesiologist” to describe a nurse anesthetist deceives patients into thinking that such nurses have equivalent education, training, and licensing as medical doctors who specialize in anesthesiology. We urge you and your AANA colleagues to stop your misappropriation of medical titles. This confuses patients, disrupts patient care, and harms professional teamwork in the clinical care setting.

The well-established and highly successful partnership between our professions in the team-based model of care has a proven track record of high quality, patient-centered care. We value this partnership, and we believe that our nurse anesthetist colleagues value it and thrive in it as well. Together, we discharge our most important mutual mission, namely the provision of safe and high-quality care to our patients. ASA is committed to maintaining that care and enhancing our members’ successful working relationships with nurse anesthetists.

AANA’s adoption and encouragement of the term “nurse anesthesiologist” to describe a nurse anesthetist deceives patients. It does not respect the nurse anesthetist’s role. Rather, it suggests that nurse anesthetists would prefer to engage in the pretense of being physicians than to take pride in their own highly accomplished profession. We believe your actions discount the vital role of the nursing profession you represent and distract from the best interests of our patients. Your actions also create discord in the clinical setting, degrading the relationship between our medical specialty and your nursing profession in the care we collectively provide.

Renaming your organization blatantly misleads the public and violates the universally accepted ethical principle that patients must have full knowledge and understanding of the identity and qualifications of the professionals who provide their care.

ASA’s focus will always be to maintain high quality, patient-centered care. Upholding the integrity and meaning of appropriate medical titles is part of that patient-centered focus. We actively oppose AANA’s misappropriation of titles in the clinical setting, and in state and federal regulatory arenas. We stand united with other medical specialties on this important issue. Stop encouraging the use of misleading and inaccurate titles – and focus on what matters most, our patients.

Sincerely,

*Beverly K Philip MD*

Beverly K. Philip, MD, FACA, FASA  
President, American Society of Anesthesiologists

cc: Paul Pomerantz, FACHE  
Chief Executive Officer, American Society of Anesthesiologists

Randall Moore, DNP, MBA, CRNA  
Chief Executive Officer, American Association of Nurse Anesthetists