



Study Information Form

Strategies to Strengthen the Anesthesia Workforce in Virginia

Authorized by the Joint Commission on Health Care on June 11, 2024.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED: Accessibility, Quality, and Equity

SOURCE OF STUDY REQUEST: Referred by letter from the House Committee on Health and Human Services and the Senate Committee on Education and Health

ESTIMATED WORKLOAD: HIGH

BACKGROUND:

A Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetist (CRNA) is an advanced practice registered nurse (APRN) who administers anesthetics to patients undergoing medical, dental, surgical or obstetrical procedures. Currently in Virginia, CRNA's must practice under the supervision of a physician. Stakeholders shared concerns that current supervision requirements for CRNA's could present barriers to increasing the anesthesia provider workforce.

During the 2024 General Assembly Session, two bills were considered regarding supervision of CRNAs. The first bill, HB1322, sought to replace "under the supervision of" to "in consultation with" in § 54.1-2900 of the *Code of Virginia* to describe the relationship between CRNAs and physicians. The second bill, SB33, sought to amend *Code of Virginia* § 54.1-2957 to define supervision as "having a licensed doctor...present during an operation or immediately available." SB33 also required a working group of stakeholders to make further recommendations to increase the anesthesia provider workforce. Both HB1322 and SB33 were referred to the JCHC to study issues related to supervision of CRNAs, as well as assessing the anesthesia provider workforce more generally, to include anesthesiologists, CRNAs, and certified anesthesiologist assistants (CAA).

STUDY ISSUES:

A study on the anesthesia workforce could be narrowly scoped to include the following objectives:

- Understand and describe the anesthesia provider workforce in Virginia to include the role of anesthesiologists, nurse anesthetists, and certified anesthesia assistants.
- Assess the impact of and note considerations for state strategies to expand the anesthesia provider workforce.

RECENT/ONGOING STUDIES IN THIS AREA:

- 2023 RAND report on Identifying Strategies for Strengthening the Health Care Workforce in the Commonwealth of Virginia, contracted by VHWDA
- 2021 DHP report on Advanced Practice Registered Nurses
- 2017 DHP study on the Feasibility of Licensure of Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants