



CRNA OR PHYSICIAN ANESTHESIOLOGIST INDEPENDENT

In certain circumstances, some care settings function best with a single anesthesia provider working independently, or as part of a team made up of only CRNAs or physician anesthesiologists.¹ Historically, lower volume facilities, particularly in rural areas, are more likely to use CRNA-only groups.² This single provider model is being rapidly adopted at urban facilities in non-hospital-based settings such as ambulatory surgical centers (ASCs) and physician offices. Given the shorter duration of ambulatory procedures and rapid turnover at these locations, facilities are quickly experiencing the benefits of an all-CRNA staff. Eliminating anesthesia providers not involved in direct patient care allows ASCs and physician offices to hire additional direct-care staff to gain efficiencies while increasing patient, surgeon, and staff satisfaction.

In large facilities, anesthesia demands are spreading beyond the walls of the main operating room suite, to areas referred to as nonoperating room anesthesia (NORA). NORA allows anesthesia providers to assist in labor and delivery, gastroenterology, radiology, and other office-based procedures. By implementing

efficiency-based anesthesia modeling, facilities are given flexibility to apply the appropriate anesthesia model accordingly. The ACT or collaborative model of anesthesia delivery may not be clinically necessary or financially sustainable without a sizeable number of cases running simultaneously,^{3,4} therefore an independent provider model may be more appropriate.

Medicare regulations authorize CRNAs to practice independent of a physician anesthesiologist. Facilities that want to establish anesthesia practice models without staffing physician anesthesiologists can do so. Alternatively, facilities may opt for using both physician anesthesiologists and CRNAs with each provider practicing independently. At the core, efficiency-driven anesthesia modeling provides freedom to implement whatever model meets the local need most “efficiently.”

REFERENCES

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