SUPPORT: Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant Licensing

Certified Anesthesiologist Assistants Are Already A Valuable Part Of The Anesthesia Care Team In Texas. The profession of Certified Anesthesiologist Assistant (CAA) was created in the 1960s as a physician assistant exclusively for the medical specialty of anesthesia. Physician Anesthesiologists delegate anesthesia tasks to CAAs and Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists (CRNAs) interchangeably in an Anesthesia Care Team. CAAs are recognized as anesthesia providers in commercial insurance, Medicaid, Medicare, and in the TriCare Systems.

In Healthcare, Lack Of Licensure Is A Barrier To Employment And Access To Care. While in Texas, a CAA can technically work under the delegation of a physician, many healthcare facilities refuse credentials to any provider who is not licensed by the state. When a Physician Anesthesiologist works in a Care Team Model with either a CAA or a CRNA, they are able to provide care for up to four patients instead of only one, thus increasing access to surgical care while maintaining a high standard of anesthesia care. Lack of licensure is a government barrier to employment for CAAs and for increased capacity in our operating rooms.

Texas Is Investing In CAA Education But Not Creating A Viable Regulatory Atmosphere. The Case Western Anesthesiologist Assistant Graduate Program in Houston is attached to the University of Houston McGovern Medical School and utilizes its Physician Anesthesiologist faculty. These graduate programs (there are 10 nationwide) require students to have premed science undergraduate degrees, must be affiliated with a medical school, and must have 56-132 didactic hours and an average of more than 2,500 clinical hours in anesthesia care to graduate. Despite the investment through the University of Houston Medical School, Texas has created a barrier for these individuals to fully practice – ultimately encouraging them to leave for other states with licensure.

This Bill Is About Improving Patient Safety. Licensing is about protecting the public’s health, safety and welfare by ensuring everyone practicing in Texas is competent to practice safely. Licensing enhances transparency for the public on the qualifications of their healthcare providers.